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# THE CAXTON EDITION OF THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND  
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
BY SIDNEY LEE

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## VOLUME I

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
THE COMEDY OF ERRORS  
THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA



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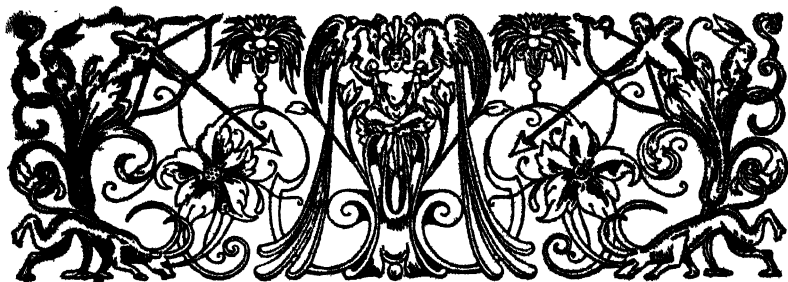
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**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**  
**BY SIDNEY LEE**

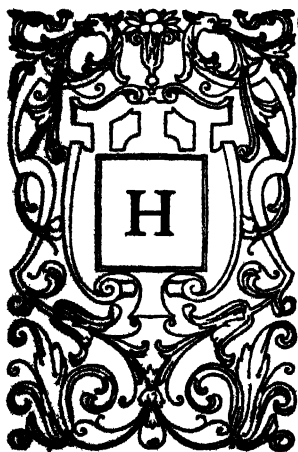




## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

BY SIDNEY LEE

### I



HOMER and Vergil, Dante and Cervantes, Milton and Goethe, are the only writers known to human history who in universality of recognition challenge comparison with Shakespeare. Obviously in the work of every one of these six masters there are certain qualities to which Shakespeare's writings offer no parallel at all. In Shakespeare's writings we seek in vain for the epic simplicity of Homer, the epic majesty of Vergil, the metaphysical fervour of Dante, the serio-comic narrative of Cervantes, the epic sublimity of Milton, the philosophic subtlety of Goethe. On the other hand, Shakespeare's achievement reveals an opulent mastery of one faculty, — the faculty of dramatic expression, of instan-

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taneous revelation of the springs of human conduct,—to which his peers on the heights of Parnassus were for the most part strangers. In many of their peculiar excellences, too, Shakespeare outshone his peers too conspicuously to admit of any questioning of the fact. He can be more spontaneous in description than Homer, more solemn in reflection than Dante, more piercing in satire than Cervantes, more searching in introspect than Goethe. No poet has been endowed with equally ready or equally complete command of language, having the triple virtues of simplicity, sensuousness, and passion. No author has sounded a more vivid or a fuller note of humour and comicality. Intimacy with the griefs and joys that sway humanity is an essential characteristic of all great literature. But no author has come within measurable distance of the fulness and certainty which marked Shakespeare's control of the sources both of merriment and pathos.

Apart from the supremacy of his intuition which governed the processes of his intellect and imagination, the cast of Shakespeare's genius differed in many notable respects from that of the genius of other giants in the world of letters. Its active exercise was not coextensive with the full term of his manhood. His life was neither cut prematurely short, nor was it prolonged to the limit of old age. Born in 1564, he died in 1616, having just completed his fifty-second year.<sup>1</sup> Notable precocity

<sup>1</sup> The general facts of Shakespeare's life are recorded in the present writer's "Life of Shakespeare." Detailed accounts of his various works appear in the various introductions which are prefixed in this edition to each of the plays and poems.

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cannot with confidence be put to his credit. His first play, "Love's Labour's Lost," may be assigned to the year 1591; his latest completed play, "The Tempest," with such portions as are attributable to him of "Henry VIII.," may be assigned to the year 1611. He was of the comparatively mature age of twenty-seven years when his career as dramatic author is positively known to have opened, and he was forty-seven years old when it closed. It is probable that the whole of his dramatic work as we know it was begun and ended within that period of twenty years which formed the midmost period of his adult career.

Unlike many eminent poets, through nearly the whole era of his activity Shakespeare produced great work — not spasmodically nor at uncertain intervals, but with the utmost regularity, at the methodical rate of two plays a year. Nor did he exhaust his powers by undue exertion before he died. He always economised his energy. From first to last, from "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and the "Comedy of Errors" to the "Winter's Tale" and "Tempest," it was his habit to borrow his plots. Though he freely altered and adapted the borrowed stories to suit his sense of artistic fitness, he did not spend labour in inventing his fables; he sought them in such accessible sources as Italian romances, the biographies of Plutarch, or the popular English history of his day — Holinshed's Chronicle. Always carefully husbanding his resources, he ceased to write when his powers were at their ripest. His last five years were spent at leisure and in retirement. A



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luminous sanity inspired the conduct of his life no less than that of his work.

Many other phases of his literary career are exceptional and rivet the attention. Shakespeare was at one with the common run of men in acquiring greater knowledge of the world—greater knowledge of practical affairs as his years grew. His experience in this respect was not distinctive. But his progressive work is characterised by much beyond increased command of merely practical or worldly wisdom. No author's work offers clearer evidence than his of the steady and orderly growth of purely poetic faculty, of imaginative and dramatic insight. The approach of age, so far from quickening, often tends to impair such qualities as these. It may be that in the minor currents of Shakespeare's productivity,—at times in his metrical effects and more often in the mechanical construction of his plots,—ebb as well as flow of faculty is discernible. But in a survey of his complete achievement, the feature that overshadows all others is the steadiness with which his poetic, artistic, dramatic power marches forward to perfection. There are signs of haste in the composition and design of his late as well as of his early plays; but these are inconspicuous straws in the mighty stream of his potentiality, which is always moving onwards, always expanding, always deepening.

It is a commonplace of criticism to detect in sequels of great books a falling off, a diminution of excellence. Shakespeare's work affords no opportunity for such observation. It was his frequent practice to resume in later

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life a theme that he had treated in earlier life, but whenever his work takes that direction he improves on his first endeavour. Having treated with success one epoch of Roman history in "Julius Cæsar," he shortly afterwards handled the succeeding epoch in "Antony and Cleopatra." Great as is the mastery with which he handled in his first Roman tragedy one mighty crisis in Rome's affairs, it is far inferior to that which he exhibited in the second Roman tragedy which dealt with a second mighty crisis. Finely balanced and penetrating as is the picture of Cæsar's murder, it is outstripped in dramatic intensity and dramatic grandeur by the portrayal of Antony's fate. The fantastic emissary from the spirit world which Shakespeare drew from the contemporary world of popular mythology and embodied in early days in the Puck of "Midsummer Night's Dream," engaged his pencil for a second time near the end of his working life, when he depicted Ariel in the "Tempest." The old character reappears impregnated with a wealth of imaginative colouring and a philosophical significance (suggesting the capabilities of human intellect divested of physical attributes), which leaves the original creation by comparison little more than a bunch of irresponsible rogueries.

Naturally in his late work Shakespeare's hand is surer when he wrestles with complexities of human conduct, but it is especially memorable that in his final labours he showed a greater mastery of the simple as well as of the complex aspects of mortal existence. The freshness of the pastoral incident in "Winter's Tale" — the sheep-shearing feast — surpasses that of all Shakespeare's pres-

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entations of country life, whether we compare it with the experimental effort of "Love's Labour's Lost" or the mature effort of "As You Like it." The dirge in "Cymbeline" for native simplicity of thought and expression has no precise parallel in the lyrics of previous years. Even more important is it to note that his capacity to portray boyhood and girlhood, girlhood especially, blossomed in its full beauty when his career was nearing its close. The boy Mamilus in "Winter's Tale" and the two boys in "Cymbeline" embody far more convincingly the charm, originality, and innocence of masculine youth than the little Prince Arthur in "King John" or even Macduff's son in the more recent tragedy of "Macbeth." Nor until Shakespeare's life had reached its last decade did he make the attempt to depict tender, ingenuous girlhood, — girlhood uncontaminated by social intercourse, — girlhood as it was moulded by Nature's hand. The peerless portraits of Beatrice and Rosalind, belonging to his middle life, prove that youthful womanhood, as it developed amid those artifices and conventions which are inseparable from civilised society, had in Shakespeare's eye no lack of bewitching gaiety nor of appealing gentleness. But the tender, ingenuous type of girlhood — of girlhood untouched by the shadows of social tradition and social custom — lay outside the scope of his energies until the end of his days came in sight. Such a type he set himself to create for the first time in Marina in his late play of "Pericles"; he developed it in Perdita in "Winter's Tale," and he wrought its apotheosis in Miranda in "The Tempest." It har-

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monises with expectation that in middle age his temperament should have acquired an increased measure of gravity and new profundity of thought which should have guided him triumphantly to the topmost peaks of tragedy. But it is difficult to match in literary history the first emergence in a dramatic poet's latest work of a perfect recognition of the elemental and ethereal spirit of feminine youth and beauty.

### II

To Shakespeare's fertile imagination was linked a native alertness of intellect which made him the most accurate of observers of inanimate no less than of animate life. But his powers of invention and observation far from exhaust the range of his endowment. He was endowed in an exalted degree with a third power which is rarely absent from great poets and is constantly and conspicuously present in Shakespeare, — the power of absorbing or assimilating the fruits of reading. Spenser, Milton, Keats, and Tennyson (to mention only great English poets) had the like power, but none had it in quite the same strength as Shakespeare. In his case, as in other cases, this power of literary assimilation rendered more robust the inherent force and activity of both his intellect and imagination. The investigation of this exceptional capacity of assimilation requires a finely balanced judgment. Critics have sometimes credited Shakespeare with exceptional ignorance, even illiteracy. They have treated him as a natural genius, owing noth-

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ing to the learning and literature that came before him. That is a view which is contradicted by the external fact of his education at the Grammar School of Stratford-on-Avon, where the gates of Latin literature were opened wide to him. It is more plainly confuted by the internal evidence of his work, where his frequent debt to other authors for his plots and phraseology lies 'upon the surface. A more modern type of critic has gone to the opposite extreme, and has credited Shakespeare with all the learning of an ideal professor of literature. That notion is as illusory as the other.

The whole truth lies between these two extreme views. Shakespeare was an eager, a rapid, and a wide reader, but he was never a scholar; all that he read passed quickly into his mind, but did not long retain there the precise original form. It was at once assimilated, digested, transmuted by his always dominant intellect and imagination, and when it came forth again, it bore the stamp of his own individuality to a far greater degree than that of its source.

Shakespeare's mind seems to have resembled a highly sensitised photographic plate which need only be exposed for the hundredth part of a second to anything, be it in life or literature, in order to receive upon its surface a finished picture which could be developed and reproduced at will. If Shakespeare's mind for the hundredth part of a second came in contact in an alehouse with a burly, good-humoured toper, the conception of a Falstaff found instantaneous admission to his brain. The character had revealed itself to him in most of its involutions as quickly

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as his eye caught sight of its external form and his ear caught the sound of the voice. Books offered Shakespeare the same opportunity of realising human life and experience. A hurried perusal of an Italian story of a Jew in Venice conveyed to him the mental picture of Shylock with all his racial temperament in energetic action, and all the background of Venetian scenery and society accurately defined. A few hours spent over "Plutarch's Lives" brought into being in Shakespeare's brain the true aspects of Roman character and Roman aspiration. Whencesoever the external impression came, whether from the world of books or the world of living men, the same mental power was at work, the same visualising instinct which made the thing he either saw or read of a living and lasting reality.

### III

In point of language and metre marked differences are observable between Shakespeare's early and late work. These differences reflect with precision stages of the growth in force of his intellect and imagination. Metre gradually acquires a flexibility which enables it to respond with increasing effect and sureness to human feeling. As Shakespeare's mental strength developed his verse steadily emancipated itself from the hampering restraints of fixed rules of prosody and gained a lawless pliancy which few have ventured to imitate and none have imitated with success. In the blank verse of the early plays a pause is strictly observed at the close of

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each line and rhyming couplets are frequent. Gradually the poet defies such artificial restrictions; the constraint of rhyme is well-nigh abandoned altogether; recourse is more frequently made to prose; the pause is varied indefinitely; long speeches are met with in the "Winter's Tale" and "Tempest," in which the pause is set in every place in the lines except the end; extra syllables, in addition to the legitimate ten, are introduced at the close of lines, and at times in the middle; the last word of the line is often a weak, unemphatic, and unaccentable conjunction or preposition.

Similarly Shakespeare's language becomes growingly irregular with the progress of his work. His style develops new obscurities which are the fruit of the quickening pace of his mental processes and the advancing fertility of his imagination. Second thoughts, second fancies, crave expression before the first are completely expounded. The fulness of his ripened mind contrived to load his words with a weight of meaning almost greater than they could conveniently bear. In plays like "Pericles," or "Cymbeline," or "The Tempest," the reader is often left to supply elisions of phrase, which offer embarrassing testimony to the lightning rapidity of their author's thought. Shakespeare has been described as the least grammatical of writers, and the comment is not without justification. For many of the irregularities which puzzle the uninstructed reader, ignorance of the syntactical principles which governed Elizabethan English may be held responsible. But other irregularities owe their presence to complexities inherent in Shake-

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Shakespeare's perfected genius. Few writers at their maturity offer greater difficulties to the student, who seeks to interpret literary speech accurately or to paraphrase it exactly. Very close application, very constant study, is essential to a full apprehension of Shakespeare's latest compositions. But no literature repays study and application equally well.

### IV

The text of Shakespeare has engaged the close attention of many hundred students of high acquirements in many countries, and has proved a fascinating study.<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare's autograph manuscripts are not known to be in existence, and the relation which the printed text bears to his original writing is a question not easy to answer decisively. He did not prepare his dramatic work for the press. Plays in Shakespeare's day were intended to be spoken and not to be read. Shakespeare, like all contemporary dramatists, wrote for the stage and not for the study. His personal disposition may fairly be credited with exceptional modesty, and it is clear that he attached, like Goethe, — one of his greatest successors in the world of literature, — small importance to the fate of his written word.

Every student has to bear in mind that Shakespeare is not known to have superintended the publication of any of his plays. His dramas became, as soon as he had

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the formation of Shakespeare's text the student is referred to the present writer's introduction to the fac-simile reproduction of the Shakespeare First Folio, published by the Oxford University Press, 1902.



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written them, the property of playhouse managers, who usually deemed their value diminished by publication, at any rate until they had exhausted their popularity in the theatre. Yet Elizabethan publishers, who were governed little by respect for the rights or feelings of others, often obtained from the playhouses, by fair means or foul, transcripts of plays and then issued them in print, without a careful inquiry as to the authenticity of the "copy" or efficient typographical revision.

During Shakespeare's lifetime there were printed and published by contemporary publishers of habitual irresponsibility sixteen separate plays, beside the two narrative poems, "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," and the "Sonnets," three works which stood on a footing somewhat different from that occupied by the plays and may possibly have been given to the world under Shakespeare's personal care. Another single play, "Othello," was published in the common way six years after his death—in 1622. All these pieces came to light in quarto form.

It was not until seven years after his death that his complete achievement issued from the printing press in the great First Folio Edition of 1623. That volume first gave permanent record to the full range of Shakespeare's work. It excluded one play, "Pericles," which had been printed (in quarto) during the author's lifetime, but no less than twenty dramas, of which the greater number rank among the literary masterpieces of the world,—nine of his fourteen comedies, five of his ten histories, and six of his twelve tragedies,—were for the

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first time presented to the reading public, were rescued from urgent peril of oblivion, by the promoters of the First Folio.

The responsibility for this first attempt to give the world a complete edition of Shakespeare's plays mainly lay with the publishers. John Heminge and Henry Condell, the managers of the company of actors to which Shakespeare had belonged in life, lent to the enterprise all the support in their power, and furnished all the "copy" that the playhouse archives afforded. But in 1628 more than thirty years had elapsed since Shakespeare had delivered his first manuscripts to the theatre, and in the case of the delivery of his latest work no less than twelve years had elapsed. During these long intervals misadventures had befallen the company's archives, and it was impossible to count on that storehouse for the supply of all the "copy" that was in request. Happily the promoters of the First Folio had at command transcripts of plays which had fallen into private hands, while the printed quartos offered them the more or less adequate text of sixteen pieces. But the authenticity of the "copy" which (from whatever source) reached the printers of the First Folio varied greatly. At times it had suffered unauthorised interpolation — at times it had suffered unauthorised abbreviation. Some of it was illegible. Yet, in spite of all typographical and critical defects, the First Folio is the sole source of our knowledge of the greater part of the Shakespearean text. The carelessness and ignorance of the printers, alike of many of the quartos and of the First Folio —

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their spelling vagaries, their misreadings of the "copy," and their inability to reproduce intelligently any words in a foreign language — have set no mean difficulties in the way of the Shakespearean scholar. But the opportunities of attaining full and satisfying knowledge of Shakespeare's writings must not be unduly disparaged. Many columns of the First Folio and many pages of the quartos can be perused uninterruptedly with understanding by the careful student of Elizabethan typography and Elizabethan English. Probably no more than one in each thousand lines presents really formidable obstacles to the expert reader's progress. And Shakespeare's writings were inherently of too fertile and too potent an excellence to suffer materially or permanently from the embarrassments or incompetence of those who first saw them through the press. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a long line of able editors set all but a few fragments of the original texts on a sound and intelligible typographical footing. The best results were embodied in the Cambridge edition, mainly prepared by Dr. Aldis Wright, and that version of the text is followed in the present edition.

The profitable opportunities which Shakespeare's works offer for exercises in textual criticism are no longer abundant. It is needful indeed to resist the temptation of making fresh conjectural emendations. Many a passage which has puzzled the uninitiated reader and has been denounced by him as a corruption of scrivener or compositor, loses its obscurity, even as it stands in the First Folio, or in the original quartos, in the seeing eye

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of the trained Shakespearean scholar. At any rate, none should now endeavour to repair the typographical errors of the first editions who is not specially equipped for the task. It is requisite to acquire beforehand a thorough knowledge of the orthography, the phraseology, the prosody, the technical vocabulary, the printer's and publisher's methods of work, which were in vogue in Shakespeare's era. The textual critic must be gifted with a natural appreciation of the rhythm of prose and verse. He must above all things have faith in the complex resources of Shakespeare's genius and some capacity to realise its varied working. The typographical defects of the original editions of Shakespeare should neither be extenuated nor exaggerated; but the unique place, which those rare volumes hold in the world's literature as the sole surviving sources of first-hand knowledge of Shakespeare's writings, gives their text indefeasible right only to be handled in the sternest spirit of reverent scholarship.

### V

It is among the happiest fortunes of the English-speaking peoples that Shakespeare should have written in their tongue, and should have become a link binding them together in a common affection for him. But Shakespeare's glory is no creation of mere patriotic or racial sentiment. Nor can it be justly regarded as an exclusively English possession.

Although an Englishman and an English writer of an epoch in English history which bears very definitely the

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impress of the national character, Shakespeare's transcendental power has long since overridden the limitations of nationality. No charge of provincial infatuation can now be brought against the English-speaking peoples who honour Shakespeare as the greatest of great men. No undue pride of race can be alleged against those who, descending from his fellow-countrymen, acclaim his supremacy in the universal empire of literature. Nations which bear no lineal relation with him are as generous in their laudation as those who are born to speak his language. His pre-eminence is recognised in every quarter of the globe to which civilised life has penetrated. All the world over, language is applied to his creations that ordinarily applies to beings of flesh and blood. Hamlet and Othello, Lear and Macbeth, Falstaff and Shylock, Brutus and Romeo, Ariel and Caliban are studied in almost every civilised tongue as if they were historic personalities, and the chief of the impressive phrases that fall from their lips are rooted in the speech of civilised humanity. Differences of national or racial temperament count for little or nothing in the recognition of Shakespeare. It was the Frenchman Dumas who gave voice to the eulogy that is not likely to be surpassed in pith or moment: "After God, Shakespeare has created most."

PREFATORY PAGES OF THE FIRST FOLIO OF 1611<sup>1</sup>

TO THE READER<sup>2</sup>

[ON SHAKESPEARE'S PORTRAIT]

**T**HIS *Figure, that thou here seest put,*  
*It was for gentle Shakespeare cut :*  
*Wherein the Graver had a strife*  
*With Nature, to out-do the life :*  
*O, could he but have drawn his wit*  
*As well in brass, as he hath hit*  
*His face, the Print would then surpass*  
*All that was ever writ in brass.*  
*But, since he cannot, Reader, look,*  
*Not on his Picture, but his Book.*

*B I*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The spelling of the contents of the prefatory pages has been modernised and the punctuation revised. Capital letters have been retained.

<sup>2</sup> Printed on the fly-leaf facing the titlepage of the First Folio, on which appeared the engraving of Shakespeare's portrait by Martin Droeshout.

<sup>3</sup> *BI*] Ben Jonson. See note on p. [xxxiii], *infra*.

## THE DEDICATION

To the most noble and Incomparable pair of brethren, William Earl of Pembroke, &c Lord Chamberlain to the King's most Excellent Majesty, and Philip Earl of Montgomery, &c Gentleman of his Majesty's bed-chamber, both knights of the most Noble Order of the Garter, and our singular good Lords.<sup>1</sup>

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

Whilst we study to be thankful in our particular, for the many favours we have received from your Lordships, we are fallen upon the ill fortune, to mingle two the most diverse things that can be, fear and rashness ; rashness in the enterprise and fear of the success. For, when we value the places your Highnesses sustain, we cannot but know their dignity greater, than to descend to the reading of these trifles : and, while we name them trifles, we have deprived ourselves of the defence of our Dedication. But since your Lordships have been pleased to think these trifles something heretofore, and have prosecuted both them and their Author living with so much favour, we hope that (they outliving him, and he not having the fate, common with some, to be executor to his own writings) you will use the like indulgence toward them you have done unto their parent. There is a great difference, whether any Book choose

<sup>1</sup> William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke (1580-1630), had been Knight of the Garter since 1608 and Lord Chamberlain since 1615. His younger brother Philip (1584-1650), who was created Earl of Montgomery in 1605, was made Knight of the Garter in 1608, and succeeded to the earldom of Pembroke on his elder brother's death in 1630. Both were generous patrons of poets and dramatists, and numerous volumes were, as in the present instance, dedicated to them jointly. Cf. Ducci's *Ars Aulica*, or *The Courtier's Arte*, 1607, Stephens' *A World of Wonders*, 1607, and Gerardo, *The Unfortunate Spaniard*, a translation by Leonard Digges of a Spanish novel, 1622.

## THE DEDICATION

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his Patrons or find them. This hath done both. For, so much were your Lordships' likings of the several parts, when they were acted, as before they were published, the Volume asked to be yours. We have but collected them, and done an office to the dead, to procure his Orphans, Guardians, without ambition either of self-profit or fame: only to keep the memory of so worthy a Friend and Fellow alive, as was our Shakespeare, by humble offer of his plays to your most noble patronage. Wherein, as we have justly observed no man to come near your Lordships but with a kind of religious address, it hath been the height of our care, who are the Presenters, to make the present worthy of your Highnesses by the perfection. But there we must also crave our abilities to be considered, my Lords. We cannot go beyond our own powers. Country hands reach forth milk, cream, fruits, or what they have; and many Nations we have heard, that had not gums and incense, obtained their requests with a leavened Cake. It was no fault to approach their Gods by what means they could, and the most, though meanest, of things are made more precious when they are dedicated to Temples. In that name, therefore, we most humbly consecrate to your Highnesses these remains of your servant Shakespeare,<sup>1</sup> that what delight is in them may be ever your Lordships', the reputation his, and the faults ours, if any be committed by a pair so careful to shew their gratitude both to the living and to the dead, as is

Your Lordships' most bounden

JOHN HEMINGE.

HENRY CONDELL.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As member of the King's Company of Players, Shakespeare was officially designated one of the King's Servants, and took rank with the grooms of the bedchamber. The offices which the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery held at Court gave them authority over the King's actors.

<sup>2</sup> Both Heminge and Condell were leading members of Shakespeare's company of actors, and were intimate friends of the dramatist. To each he left by will 26s 8d wherewith to buy memorial rings.



## TO THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS .

**FROM** the most able, to him that can but spell. There you are numbered. We had rather you were weighed. Especially, when the fate of all books depends upon your capacities : and not of your heads alone, but of your purses. Well ! it is now public, and you will stand for your privileges, we know : to read and censure. Do so, but buy it first. That doth best commend a Book, the Stationer says. Then, how odd soever your brains be, or your wisdoms, make your license the same, and spare not. Judge your sixpen'orth, your shillingsworth, your five shillingsworth at a time, or higher, so you rise to the just rates, and welcome. But, whatever you do, buy. Censure will not drive a Trade, or make the Jack go. And though you be a Magistrate of wit, and sit on the Stage<sup>1</sup> at Blackfriars,<sup>2</sup> or the Cock-pit,<sup>3</sup> to arraign Plays daily, know these Plays have had their trial already and stood out all Appeals ; and do now come forth quitted rather by a Decree of Court, than any purchased Letters of commendation.

It had been a thing, we confess, worthy to have been wished,

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<sup>1</sup> In Elizabethan and Jacobean theatres, men of fashion and critics were permitted to occupy seats on the stage.

<sup>2</sup> The Blackfriars' Theatre, on part of the present site of *The Times* office in London, was formed out of a private house in 1597, by Shakespeare's company of actors, but was leased to another company until 1609, and was not occupied by Shakespeare's company till after that date, when the dramatist was nearing retirement from active life.

<sup>3</sup> The Cockpit in Drury Lane was until 1615 devoted to cockfighting and other undignified shows. It was then converted into a theatre, and was a fashionable playhouse until its demolition during the civil war. The existing Drury Lane Theatre stands in its near neighbourhood.

## TO THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS

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that the Author himself had lived to have set forth, and overseen his own writings. But since it hath been ordained otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envy his Friends the office of their care and pain to have collected and published them, and so to have published them, as where (before) you were abused with diverse stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors, that exposed them: even those, are now offered to your view, cured and perfect of their limbs; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them. Who, as he was a happy imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it. His mind and hand went together: and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers. But it is not our province, who only gather his works, and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that read him. And there we hope to your divers capacities you will find enough, both to draw and hold you: for his wit can no more lie hid, than it could be lost. Read him, therefore; and again, and again: and then if you do not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can be your guides: if you need them not, you can lead yourselves, and others. And such Readers we wish him.

JOHN HEMINGE.

HENRY CONDELL.

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

TO THE MEMORY OF MY BELOVED, THE AUTHOR, MR. WILLIAM<sup>1</sup>  
SHAKESPEARE AND WHAT HE HATH LEFT US.

TO draw no envy (*Shakespeare*) on thy name,  
Am I thus ample to thy Book, and Fame :  
While I confess thy writings to be such,  
As neither Man, nor Muse, can praise too much.  
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these ways  
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise :  
For silliest Ignorance on these may light,  
Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right ;  
Or blind Affection which doth ne'er advance  
The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance,  
Or crafty Malice, might pretend this praise,  
And think to ruin, where it seemed to raise.  
There are, as some infamous Bawd, or whore,  
Should praise a Matron. What could hurt her more ?  
But thou art proof against them, and indeed  
Above th' ill fortune of them, or the need.  
I, therefore, will begin. Soul of the Age !  
The applause ! delight ! the wonder of our Stage !  
My *Shakespeare*, rise : I will not lodge thee by  
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Burial in what is now known as The Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey had been allotted to these three poets. Spenser and Beaumont were interred there in Shakespeare's lifetime, the former early in 1599, the latter only six weeks before Shakespeare's death, on 9 March, 1616. An elegiac sonnet on Shakespeare by William Basse, first printed in John Donne's poems in 1633, and

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*A little further, to make thee a room:  
Thou art a Monument, without a tomb,  
And art alive still, while thy book doth live,  
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.  
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses:  
I mean with great, but disproportioned Muses.  
For, if I thought my judgment were of years,  
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,  
And tell, how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,  
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line;<sup>1</sup>  
And though thou had'st small Latin, and less Greek,  
From thence to honour thee, I would not seek  
For names; but call forth thund'ring Aeschylus,  
Euripides, and Sophocles to us,  
Paccuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,<sup>2</sup>  
To life again, to hear thy Buskin tread,  
And shake a Stage: or, when thy Socks were on,  
Leave thee alone, for the comparison*

---

then appended to the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's Poems, begins thus:

“Renowned Spenser, lie a thought more nigh  
To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie,” etc.

Basse's elegy seems to have been written shortly after Shakespeare's death on 23 April, 1616, and Ben Jonson apparently owed to it the suggestion for these lines.

<sup>1</sup> John Lyly (1554?-1606), the author of *Euphues*, made much reputation as a writer of comedies. Thomas Kyd (1557?-1595?) and Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) gained their fame in tragedy. Only Marlowe was gifted with genuine tragic power.

<sup>2</sup> Of the three writers of Latin tragedies here mentioned, fragments alone survive of the work of Marcus Pacuvius (220-180 B.C.) and of Lucius Accius (170-90 B.C.). The well-known dramatist, Lucius Annaeus Seneca, a native of Cordova, (5 B.C.-65 A.D.), ten of whose tragedies are extant in a complete state, is intended by “him of Cordova.”

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*Of all, that insolent Greece or haughty Rome  
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.  
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show,  
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.  
He was not of an age, but for all time !  
And all the Muses still were in their prime,  
When like Apollo he came forth to warm  
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm !  
Nature herself was proud of his designs,  
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines !  
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,  
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other Wit.  
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,  
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please ;  
But antiquated and deserted lie  
As they were not of Nature's family.  
Yet must I not give Nature all : thy Art,  
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.  
For though the Poet's matter Nature be,  
His Art doth give the fashion. And, that he,  
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,  
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat  
Upon the Muses' anvil : turn the same,  
(And himself with it) that he thinks to frame ;  
Or for the laurel, he may gain a scorn,  
For a good Poet's made, as well as born.  
And such wert thou. Look how the father's face  
Lives in his issue ; even so, the race  
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shin  
In his well-turned and true-filed lines :  
In each of which he seems to shake a Lance,  
As brandished at the eyes of Ignorance.  
Sweet swan of Avon ! what a sight it were  
To see thee in our waters yet appear,*

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,  
That so did take Eliza and our James !  
But stay, I see thee in the Hemisphere  
Advanced, and made a Constellation there !  
Shine forth, thou Star of poets, and with rage,  
Or influence, chide, or cheer the drooping Stage ;  
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourned like night,  
And despairs day, but for thy Volumes light.*

BEN : JONSON.<sup>1</sup>

UPON THE LINES AND LIFE OF THE FAMOUS SCENIC POET,  
MASTER WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

*THOSE hands, which you so clapped, go now and wring,  
You Britons brave, for done are Shakespeare's days :  
His days are done, that made the dainty Plays,  
Which made the Globe<sup>2</sup> of heaven and earth to ring.  
Dried is that vein, dried is the Thespian spring,  
Turned all to tears, and Phæbus clouds his rays :  
That corpse, that coffin now bestick those bays,  
Which crown'd him Poet first, then Poets' King.  
If Tragedies might any Prologue have,  
All those he made would scarce make one to this :*

---

Ben Jonson (1573?-1637), the poet and dramatist, was, for the last eighteen years of Shakespeare's life, on terms of intimacy with him. In his *Discoveries* Jonson wrote of Shakespeare in a more critical vein, but included there the famous words, "I loved the man and do honour his memory on this side Idolatry as much as any. . . . There was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned."

The Globe Theatre on the Bankside, Southwark, was built in 1599 and was thenceforth identified with the production of Shakespeare's dramas.

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*Where Fame, now that he gone is to the grave  
(Death's public tiring-house) the Nuncius is.  
For though his line of life went soon about,  
The life yet of his lines shall never out.*

HUGH HOLLAND.<sup>1</sup>

TO THE MEMORY OF M[R]. W. SHAKESPEARE

*WE wondered (Shakespeare) that thou went'st so soon  
From the World's Stage, to the Grave's Tiring-room.  
We thought thee dead, but this thy printed worth  
Tells thy Spectators that thou went'st but forth  
To enter with applause. An Actor's Art  
Can die and live to act a second part.  
That's but an Exit of Mortality;  
This, a Re-entrance to a Plaudite.*

I. M.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh Holland (d. 1633), Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a member of the Mermaid Club, contributed verses to Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, 1605, and to many other books by well-known authors of the day.

<sup>2</sup> I. M.] i. e., James Mabbe (1572-1642?), Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, who was well known in his day as a translator from the Spanish. \*

## COMMENDATORY VERSES

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TO THE MEMORY OF THE DECEASED AUTHOR  
MASTER W. SHAKESPEARE.

SHAKESPEARE, at length thy pious fellows give  
The world thy Works: thy Works, by which outlive  
Thy Tomb thy name must; when that stone is rent,  
And Time dissolves thy Stratford Monument,<sup>1</sup>  
Here we alive shall view thee still. This Book,  
When Brass and Marble fade, shall make thee look  
Fresh to all Ages: when Posterity  
Shall loathe what 's new, think all is prodigy  
That is not Shakespeare's: every Line, each Verse  
Here shall revive, redeem thee from thy Hearse.  
Nor Fire, nor cankering Age, as Naso said<sup>2</sup>  
Of his, thy wit-fraught Book shall once invade.  
Nor shall I ere believe, or think thee dead  
(Though missed) until our bankrupt Stage be sped  
(Impossible) with some new strain & out-do  
Passions of Juliet or her Romeo;  
Or till I hear a Scene more nobly take,  
Than when thy half-Sword parleying Romans spake,  
Till these, till any of thy Volumes rest  
Shall with more fire, more feeling be expressed,  
Be sure, our Shakespeare, thou canst never die,  
But, crown'd with Laurel, live eternally.

L. DIGGES.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is the earliest known reference to the monument to Shakespeare in the chancel of the church at Stratford-on-Avon.

<sup>2</sup> Naso said] Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XV, 871 *seqq.* Shakespeare adapts the same lines in his Sonnets (LV, 1-7).

Leonard Digges (1588-1635), M. A., of University College, Oxford, contributed a second elegy on Shakespeare in somewhat similar vein to the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's Poems.



## THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS \*

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THE NAMES OF THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS IN ALL THESE PLAYS:<sup>1</sup>

†William Shakespeare	Samuel Gilburn
†Richard Burbage	†Robert Armin
John Heminge	†William Ostler
Augustine Phillips	Nathaniel Field
†William Kemp	John Underwood
†Thomas Pope	Nicholas Tooley
†George Bryan	William Ecclestone
Henry Condell	Joseph Taylor
†William Sly	Robert Benfield
†Richard Cowley	Robert Gough
John Lowin	Richard Robinson
Samuel Cross	John Shank
†Alexander Cook	John Rice

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<sup>1</sup> These men were fellow-members with Shakespeare of the King's Company of Players. Those marked † died before the publication of the First Folio in 1623. The last survivor of these fellow-actors of Shakespeare was John Lowin. He seems to have died at the patriarchal age of ninety-three in 1669.

## •ADDITIONAL COMMENDATORY VERSES FROM THE SECOND FOLIO OF 1632

UPON THE EFFIGIES OF MY WORTHY FRIEND, THE AUTHOR

\* MASTER WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, AND HIS WORKS

SPECTATOR, *this Life's Shadow is to see*  
*The truer image and a livelier he*  
*Turn Reader. But, observe his Comic vein,*  
*Laugh, and proceed next to a Tragic strain,*  
*Then weep ; so when thou find'st two contraries,*  
*Two different passions from thy rapt soul rise,*  
*Say, (who alone affect such wonders could)*  
*Rare Shakespeare to the life thou dost behold.*<sup>1</sup>

AN EPITAPH ON THE ADMIRABLE DRAMATIC POET,  
W. SHAKESPEARE<sup>2</sup>

WHAT *need my Shakespeare for his honour'd bones,*  
*The labour of an Age, in piled stones*  
*Or that his hallow'd Reliques should be hid*  
*Under a star-ypointing Pyramid ?*  
*Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,*  
*What needst thou such dull witness of thy name ?*  
*Thou in our wonder and astonishment*  
*Hast built thyself a lasting Monument :*

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<sup>1</sup> These lines bear no signature, and there is no clue to their authorship.

These lines are by John Milton, and were re-printed in the 1645 edition of his poems with the heading "On Shakespeare. 1630."

## ADDITIONAL COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*For whilst to the shame of slow-endavouring Art  
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each part  
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued Book,  
Those Delphic Lines with deep Impression took ;  
Then thou our fancy of her self bereaving,  
Dost make us Marble with too much conceiving,  
And so Sepulchred in such pomp dost lie  
That Kings for such a Tomb would wish to die.*

### ON WORTHY MASTER SHAKESPEARE AND HIS POEMS

*A MIND reflecting ages past, whose clear  
And equal surface can make things appear  
Distant a Thousand years, and represent  
Them in their lively colours' just extent :  
To outrun hasty time, retrieve the fates,  
Roll back the heavens, blow ope the iron gates  
Of death and Lethe, where confused lie  
Great heaps of ruinous mortality :  
In that deep dusky dungeon to discern  
A royal Ghost from Churls ; by art to learn  
The physiognomy of shades, and give  
Them sudden birth, wond'ring how oft they live ;  
What story coldly tells, what Poets feign  
At second hand, and picture without brain,  
Senseless and soulless shows : to give a Stage  
(Ample and true with life) voice, action, age,  
As Plato's year and new Scene of the world  
Them unto us, or us to them had hurl'd :  
To raise our ancient Sovereigns from their hearse,  
Make Kings his subjects ; by exchanging verse,  
Enlive their pale trunks ; that the present age  
Joys in their joy, and trembles at their rage :*

## ADDITIONAL COMMENDATORY VERSES

*Yet so to temper passion, that our ears  
Take pleasure in their pain, and eyes in tears  
Both weep and smile ; fearful at plots so sad,  
Then, laughing at our fear ; abus'd and glad  
To be abus'd, affected with that truth  
Which we perceive is false; pleas'd in that rath  
At which we start ; and by elaborate play  
Tortur'd and tickled ; by a crablike way  
Time past made pastime, and in ugly sort  
Disgorging up his ravine for our sport :  
— While the Plebeian Imp, from lofty throne,  
Creates and rules a world, and works upon  
Mankind by secret engines ; now to move  
A chilling pity, then a vigorous love ;  
To strike up and stroke down, both joy and ire,  
To steer th' affections ; and by heavenly fire  
Mould us anew. Sto'l'n from ourselves —*

*This, and much more, which cannot be express'd,  
But by himself, his tongue and his own breast,  
Was Shakespeare's freehold ; which his cunning brain  
Improv'd by favour of the ninefold train.  
The buskin'd Muse, the Comic Queen, the grand  
And louder tone of Clio, nimble hand,  
And nimbler foot of the melodious pair,  
The Silver-voiced Lady ; the most fair  
Calliope, whose speaking silence daunts.  
And she whose praise the heavenly body chants.*

*These jointly woo'd him, envying one another  
(Obey'd by all as Spouse, but lov'd as brother)  
And wrought a curious robe of sable grave,  
Fresh green, and pleasant yellow, red most brave,  
And constant blue, rich purple, guiltless white,  
The lowly Russet, and the Scarlet bright ;  
Branch'd and embroider'd like the painted Spring*

## ADDITIONAL COMMENDATORY VERSES

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*Each leaf match'd with a flower, and each string  
Of golden wire, each line of silk; there run  
Italian works whose thread the Sisters spun;  
And there did sing, or seem to sing, the choice  
Birds of a foreign note and various voice.  
Here hangs a mossy rock; there plays a fair  
But chiding fountain purled: not the air,  
Nor clouds nor thunder, but were living drawn,  
Not out of common Tiffany or Lawn,  
But fine materials, which the Muses know  
And only know the countries where they grow.*

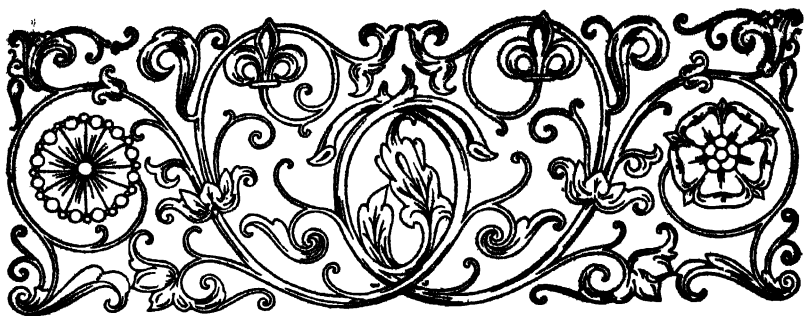
*Now, when they could no longer him enjoy  
In mortal garments pent, — death may destroy,  
They say, his body, but his verse shall live  
And more than nature takes, our hands shall give;  
In a less volume, but more strongly bound  
Shakespeare shall breathe and speak, with Laurel crown'd  
Which never fades: fed with Ambrosian meat  
In a well-lined vesture rich and neat.  
So with this robe they clothe him, bid him wear it;  
For time shall never stain, nor envy tear it.*

The friendly admirer of his Endowments. I. M. S.<sup>1</sup>

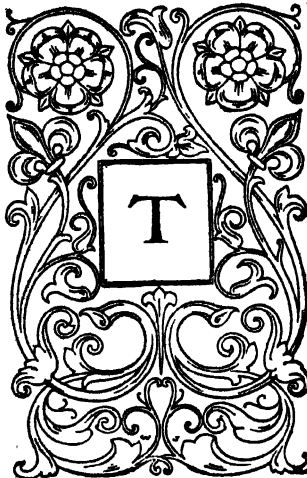
<sup>1</sup> I. M. S.] These initials have not been satisfactorily explained. Coleridge, who quoted the poem in his "Lectures on Shakespeare," 1811-12 (No. IX), and declared it to have "no equal for justness and distinctness of description in reference to the powers and qualities of lofty genius," confidently assigned it to John Milton, Student. Another claimant is Jasper Mayne, Student, a well-known poet and dramatist (1604-1672). "In Memoriam Scriptoris," "John Milton, Senior," "John Marston, Student," "John Marston, Satyrist" seem to be less probable interpretations.

# **THE COMEDY OF ERRORS**





## INTRODUCTION


**T**HE history of "The Comedy of Errors" is not encumbered with many of those theories which have heaped about the tomb of Shakespeare so vast a cairn of conjecture. The commentators find little in its text to provoke their ingenuity, and no battle royal has raged about the questions of its date or its authorship. It is quietly allowed, by the most sceptical, to be an unadulterated work of the master, and no one has seriously attempted to overturn the slender, but sensible and sufficient, arguments on which its position among Shakespeare's writings is based. No early quarto of it is known ; it appears for the first time immediately after "Measure for Measure" in the folio of 1623. Meres mentions it among his six excellent comedies of Shakespeare in 1598, in the course of his "Palladis Tamia." But we know that it was played in 1594, and it is evidently

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## *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*

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still older. There is a patent reference in the third act to that civil war in France which went on from the summer of 1589 to that of 1593. Another and vaguer allusion to "whole armadoes of carracks" is supposed to confine us to the period 1589-91. The consensus of internal evidence, in end-tests and the like, puts "The Comedy of Errors" second in the series of Shakespeare's undoubted plays, between "Love's Labour's Lost," which may belong to 1589, and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," which may belong to 1591. We are not likely to be confuted if we claim 1590 for its year of composition.

The critical interest of "The Comedy of Errors" centres in the fact that it is the only surviving play of Shakespeare in which we observe that he deliberately or closely follows a previous work from the hand of an acknowledged master of drama. In other productions we find him competing with such contemporaries as Greene and Kyd, and easily excelling them. Elsewhere we may persuade ourselves to see the influence of Seneca upon him, or even that of Ariosto. But these traces of apprenticeship to foreign models are slight, and above all they are fragmentary and episodic. For instance, — and we can wish for none more appropriate, — we see in the strictly parallel farce of "The Taming of the Shrew" evidence of Latin and Italian influence, yet this play is in its essentials — that is to say, in all its unchallenged Petruchio and Katherine scenes — in conception as well as execution a characteristic and independent work of Shakespeare. This "The Comedy of Errors" is not; here for once and never again Shake-

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*speare bent his genius to that of a predecessor only less adventurous than himself. It was one thing to compete with the vague "precursors" of 1580; it was another thing to interpret, as an engraver interprets a painting, a masterpiece by the greatest comic playwright of Latin antiquity.*

Hence the very first thing to be done in examining "The Comedy of Errors" critically is to discover what relation it bears to the "Menæchmi" of Plautus, of which it is a studied paraphrase or recast. No English translation of Plautus had been published when Shakespeare's play was composed, and commentators have shown great ingenuity in trying to prove that the poet must have had access to an English version of the "Menæchmi," made in verse by William Warner, but not printed until 1594. It is to exaggerate the littleness of Shakespeare's "little Latin" to suppose that he required such help. At that time Plautus was abundantly studied in England, and nothing could have been easier than to obtain a sufficiently full impression of a text which was at no point to be implicitly followed. No doubt the omniscience of Shakespeare has been exaggerated, but it is needless to carry reaction so far as to regard him as a dunce and an ignoramus. The existence of adaptations of the "farce of mistaken identity" in several languages has led some critics to see in these the sources of Shakespeare's play, and, in particular, a rough-and-tumble drollery called "Jack Juggler," of 1563, has been named. But a glance at these trifles will prove to us that Shakespeare, if he knew of them, discarded them

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

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altogether, and started anew from the plot of the "Menæchmi."

There was much in the temperament of Plautus which could not fail to be attractive to the youthful Shakespeare, who would instinctively recognise in that joyous buccaneer of the Latin stage qualities closely akin to certain of his own. The sort of boisterous animal spirits, held in check only by such discipline as the cultivation of romantic beauty may supply, would be exemplified for us in dramatic literature of the first class only by the works of Plautus, if Shakespeare had not written "The Comedy of Errors," "The Taming of the Shrew," and "The Merry Wives of Windsor." Nearly seventeen centuries passed over Europe without producing a playwright capable of attempting to rival, in its own redundant and efflorescent kind, the marvellous comedy of "The Captives." In a brilliant passage, too, Mr. Mackail has shown that if we wish to discover a parallel to the maritime romance of the "Rudens" we must look for it no earlier than in "A Winter's Tale." It is the more needful to remind ourselves of these elements of likeness between Shakespeare and Plautus, because it is precisely in the "Menæchmi" that the likeness may evade us, since the latter comes down to us as one of the least sentimental and least romantic of all the pure farces of Plautus. Perhaps the note which criticism should strike in approaching "The Comedy of Errors" is that this is the "Menæchmi" rewritten as Plautus himself might have composed it had he approached the subject in one of his more lyrical and more fertile moods.

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The comedy of the "Menæchmi" has been called dry and bare. It is, as we have admitted, less clothed upon in the raiment of romantic poetry than even some of its own coevals. But it cannot be depreciated without danger of injustice, and still more shall we be liable to that charge if we attempt to minimise Shakespeare's debt to it. The central notion of the twin-brothers, who have not met or heard of one another since early childhood, each suddenly infringing on the social province of the other, and starting a myriad burlesque confusions,—this may or may not be original in the Latin dramatist. But we know of no earlier version of it, and we may be content to suppose it, as Shakespeare of course never doubted it to be, the invention of Plautus.

It is one of the most innocently diverting and most successfully farcical of all the germ-plots invented or adapted by Plautus; and we may see that Shakespeare—who knew other plays by the same dramatist, since there are clear evidences of his acquaintance with the "Amphitryon" and "The Captives"—was drawn to it at once by its inherent excellence and perhaps by the comparatively meagre use which Plautus had made of its opportunities for farcical movement.

Shakespeare began by falling into what was, I suppose, a small direct error. The scene of the "Menæchmi" was Epidamnus (or "Epidamnum," as Shakespeare calls it). This place was situated on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, in what is now Albania; the modern name of it is Durazzo, and it lies exactly south of Dulcigno. Not only was this town in relation with Syracuse, and not

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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at all with Ephesus, but Shakespeare's own story brings in Epidamnum and Epidaurus, too; some critics have suggested that he chose Ephesus because it was a centre of witchcraft. I confess I cannot pretend to follow the geography of "The Comedy of Errors," although that of the "Menæchmi" is intelligible enough. In manipulating the story, however, Shakespeare's next change was altogether an improvement upon Plautus. Ægeon, whose name in the Latin play is Moschus, had died of grief long before the "Menæchmi" begins, and it is the grandfather who survives and who is the prime mover of the search; he remains, however, in Syracuse, and all the beautiful first scene of "The Comedy of Errors," with the humane Duke of Ephesus, and the sad, romantic figure of the sea-worn Ægeon, is wholly Shakespeare's in conception as well as in execution. This scene, too, contains one of his splendid shipwrecks, not less fine, in its quieter way, than the celebrated description in "Pericles." And Æmilia, too, the Abbess, who in such a charming, childish fashion turns out at the end of the play to have been Ægeon's wife, and mother to the restless and unobservant Antipholus at her doors, — she also is one of Shakespeare's sketches, and responds to nothing at all in the "Menæchmi."

It is particularly worthy of notice, in this connection, that "The Comedy of Errors," if we compare it closely with the rest of its author's very early plays, is remarkable for its solid and consistent architecture. It seems, in a word, to have a better structure than they have. This is directly owing to Plautus, and it is very interesting

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to see how, at this early stage in his career, the man who was to become the greatest maker of plays in the world, admitted the superior judgment of his great Latin predecessor. When he was conceiving "The Comedy of Errors," say in 1589, Shakespeare had not attained, in this technical matter of the building up of a good stage-play, the vivid and sprightly art of Plautus. I do not know anything more interesting in its way than the evidence which "The Comedy of Errors" offers us of the fact that Shakespeare was aware of his own immaturity. In this play, and in this alone, we see him face to face with a writer of his own class, who is still his superior as an artist, and we find him loyally acknowledging that, in the conduct of a lively plot, Plautus still knows the business better than he does.

In the central intrigues of the play, we discover that Shakespeare does not diverge at all from his Latin original. As the "Menæchmi," so "The Comedy of Errors" rests on the humorous situation of a twin-brother unexpectedly turning up in the domestic life of a man who has never given him a thought, yet who is practically so identical with the intruder that those most intimate with the one cannot distinguish him from the other. In all this essential part of the story, the conception of the two Antipholi is precisely the same as that of Menæchmus of Epidamnus and Menæchmus Sosicles. And the unities of time and place which Shakespeare on other occasions ("The Tempest" being the great exception) has treated with so much indifference, are here carefully transferred from the Latin. There is even the same

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confusion, or heedlessness, about the age of the brothers. The commentators of "The Comedy of Errors" have been much occupied in reconciling the "thirty-three years" of which the Abbess speaks at the end of the fifth act with *Ægeon's* vague arithmetic in the first act. But Plautus is just as uncertain, and unless we read him very closely, we may be led to believe that the twin-brothers were only in their twelfth year when *Sosicles* came to *Epidamnus*.

Throughout, the nature of Shakespeare's change is not in the direction of complete modification of the plot, but in that of adornment, addition, enrichment. The most striking instance of this is the creation of the second *Dromio*, as twin-slave, who repeats, in an exquisitely entertaining way, the embarrassing identity of his master. In Plautus, the slave of the invading *Menæchmus* is named *Messenio*, and he has no counterpart in *Epidamnus*. The place there of the other *Dromio* is filled partly by *Cylindrus* the cook, partly by *Peniculus* the parasite. By omitting these characters, Shakespeare lost a little in variety, but he gained extremely in richness of humour. He doubled his effects, and, in doing so, we notice his skill in intensifying instead of distracting our keen and delighted observation of the Master Twins. For the odd adventures of either *Dromio* are so conceived that they never disturb the imbroglio, but always add to it, and this little change of purview increases at every turn the fun of the intrigue.

To support his *Dromios*, — who have now to be relieved of some of the comic business, — Shakespeare has invented *Balthazar*, *Angelo*, and the Merchants. But it

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is observable that in the figure of Pinch, the school-master, he adopts, with very slight alteration, a truly Plautan creation, the unseemly being who is an unnamed Doctor in the "Menæchmi." These changes are quite unimportant, but that is not the case with the beautiful and touching figure of Luciana, the sister-in-law of Antipholus of Ephesus. This was a conception which could never have occurred to the boisterous Latin playwright, and no more exquisite example of Shakespeare's delicate humanity, of the "gospel-light" in which he lived and worked, could be given than this introduction of a pure, generous, and romantic girl into the background of his romping farce. He forgets all about Plautus on the few occasions on which he allows this pretty creature to entertain us, and in the earliest and almost the only scene in which a long speech is given to Luciana, she comes on to the boards with Antipholus of Syracuse in a smiling temper to which nothing short of two complete sonnets can give expression. And in these pieces of flowing, rounded verse, we have, perhaps for the first time, that note of gentle amenity, of persuasive feminine sweetness, which Shakespeare was to create in English poetry : —

"Alas! poor women! make us but believe,  
Being compact of credit, that you love us;  
Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve;  
We in your motion turn, — and you may move us!" —

so Luciana murmurs, like a brooklet or a wood-lark, and we forget for a moment that she is dancing hand in hand with Punch and Judy.



## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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We are discovered, however, in the act of *lèse-majesté* towards the matronly figure of Adriana. But Adriana it is, surely, impossible to take very seriously. Oddly enough, it is precisely in this character that critics of the past have enforced themselves to see, not merely the special art of Shakespeare, but numerous traits of his personal habits and even of his autobiography. "Oh! that second-best bed at Stratford," the commentators have cried, even as they have actually been reminded of his own twin-babies by the brothers of Syracuse and Ephesus! But the fact is that it was no precocious observation of the shrewishness of wives, any more than any domestic note of the similarity of twins, that produced these features of "The Comedy of Errors." As completely as Luciana belongs to Shakespeare, so does Adriana belong to Plautus. We have only to turn to the "Menæchmi" to see that the wife of the brother in Epidamnus (the invading brother is in each play still unmarried) is precisely such a shrew as Adriana is. Her *petulantia linguæ*, her hasty freakish temper, her qualities of a scold and a termagant, are not indicated by Shakespeare more clearly than by Plautus, although more carefully, with less of the flying touch of a mere brilliant sketch. But the wife of Menæchmus fidgets and fusses exactly as Adriana does; her husband does not scruple to call her a "lioness," and she has a father — whom Shakespeare ignored — who acknowledges and deprecates the violence of her temper.

At the close of the "Menæchmi," the indignant wife flies into the house in terror of the violence of Menæchmus

## INTRODUCTION

Sosicles, and we see no more of her. Plautus was not sufficiently interested in her to let us hear how she was affected by the clearing up of the mystery of the two brothers. But Shakespeare is infinitely more subtle than this. He is too closely touched by the misfortunes of Adriana to pack her off, mystified and punished, in her rebellion of spirit. The feigned madness of the husband occurs in each play, but it is Shakespeare only who imagines the cry from Adriana's heart:—

“Hold! hurt him not, for God's sake! he is mad,”

and who makes her in her remorse accuse herself of offences against her husband, which are so much too emphatic that the gentle Luciana is obliged at once to protest. It is more than doubtful, indeed, whether either Menæchmus in the farce of Plautus would be held by the audience to deserve such consideration. The part of the Courtesan (she is called Erotium in the Latin play) has been preserved and rather closely transferred by Shakespeare to “The Comedy of Errors.” But Antipholus is rather a wayward visitor than anything worse, whereas Menæchmus of Epidamnus is the bearer to Erotium of presents which he has impudently stolen from his wife's wardrobe. The other brother is not less of a rogue, for he is content to rob Erotium of her mantle and her bracelet; and slight as is the change which Shakespeare has introduced, in the business of the goldsmith and the chain, we feel it to produce in every particular an improvement in grace and moral decorum. So, too, it will be noticed that on each occasion Plautus's slaves are

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much more impudent and disloyal than Shakespeare could ever allow his to be, even at their most petulant moments.

In the beginning of the third act of "The Comedy of Errors," Shakespeare enriches his material by borrowing from another comedy of Plautus, the "Amphitruo." In that play Jupiter takes the shape of the Theban general while he is away from Thebes, fighting for his country, and the god is accompanied by Mercury in the guise of Sosia, Amphitryon's slave. The general returns, and is driven away by the intruders, the imbroglio being almost exactly the same as that accepted by the English poet. Shakespeare, however, with his customary tact, redeems the situation from its Latin coarseness, and keeps this incident also in the light, high key of the rest of his farcical comedy. It might be worth while, before we lay down "The Comedy of Errors," to see how the "Amphitruo" episode was treated later on by Molière, and, more independently than is commonly realised, by Dryden. The curious reader should, at the same time, glance at "Les Jumeaux," in which Rotrou made his adaptation of the "Menæchmi" plot.

On the whole we see that what is particularly observant in the general character of "The Comedy of Errors" is the light it throws on the advancing technical skill of Shakespeare. Up to this time the genius of the youthful dramatist had shown itself more in splendid passages and single lines than in the building up of a whole play. The more closely we examine these earliest years, it must be confessed, the more vague do the lines of biography

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become, the more do the outlines flicker in the dim air of our ignorance. However, we do see faintly, as precedent to our "Comedy of Errors," a chain of chronicle-plays on the reign of Henry VI. with such unmistakably Shakespearian things in them as the death of Mortimer and the farce of Jack Cade; more dimly still we see a "Titus Andronicus," perhaps by Kyd, which Shakespeare may have touched; while really the only very certain testimony to his skill as a craftsman is "Love's Labour's Lost," to which all critics combine in assigning priority among Shakespeare's productions for the stage.

The plot of "Love's Labour's Lost" is of the slightest and the feeblest, and it is moreover believed to be Shakespeare's invention. It is plausible to suppose that the thinness of it was patent to him as he revised it, and that he persuaded himself that he had been too ambitious in taking upon his sole fancy so arduous a task. In the chronicle-play and in the Roman horror, he merely embroiders upon some rough texture woven by Kyd or Greene or a humbler playwright quite unknown. None of these, nor yet his own still callow invention, satisfies Shakespeare, whom we now find in "The Comedy of Errors" going humbly and attentively to school. This is a work of mental discipline; here he is sitting at the feet of Plautus, no rough amateur with a brilliant notion of stage-business, like Kyd, but a finished and exquisitely accomplished master of the theatre. One of the slightest pieces of this Latin playwright, one which is so slight that it is almost a sketch, Shakespeare takes and adapts with a careful sense of his own deficiencies and of the

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requirements of the new and ardent English public. He looks to Plautus to learn how to please, but already he is tall enough to peer over the Latin poet's shoulder and to see theatrical possibilities of which Plautus never dreamed.

Our task, therefore, is to weigh these possibilities, to examine these embroideries. We find that they are all of them, without exception, additions in the direction of what is humane and graceful and fanciful. The note of Plautus, with all his boisterous high spirits, is hard and dry; his humour is that of a daring and brilliant school-boy. Shakespeare introduces the adult mood; even his farce is tender and indulgent. Where Plautus sees nothing but the obvious horse-play, the nuances of humanity reveal themselves to Shakespeare. The characters in the "Menæchmi" are marionettes, moved about the stage, indeed, with marvellous adroitness and turning somersaults with dazzling agility, but in their essence mechanical, with an energy that is vicious, puerile, and practically non-existent. Shakespeare comes and clothes these dolls with romantic life, adding here a touch and there a movement which just suffices to remove them out of the realm of the puppet-show. He is not yet a perfect master of his own genius, and in consequence the transformation is not complete. The little figures seem to palpitate for a few minutes, and then they stiffen again into marionettes. But at all events, the breath of life has passed over the stage; the first puffs of it brighten the eyes and fill the hair of Luciana and Ægeon.

It would take us too far to enter very closely into the

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relations which ingenuity may discover between "The Comedy of Errors" and other plays of Shakespeare. There is entanglement in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and mistaken identity in "Twelfth Night." The attitude of Adriana to her husband, Antipholus of Ephesus, is repeated with much greater fulness in "The Taming of the Shrew." In all these instances the Elizabethan poet takes from Plautus what he finds left there in a state entirely mundane and superficial, and he adds to it his own spiritual colouring. In "Hamlet" he was to say, speaking of the Players, that

"Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light for them ;"

Shakespeare had always present with him this conviction of the "lightness" of the Latin playwright, whose "Miles Gloriosus" had led directly to the earliest English comedy, "Ralph Roister Doister," and who had inspired "Gammer Gurton's Needle" with his boisterous humour. Shakespeare does not reject or disdain this boyish gaiety, but he adds solidity to it; he takes the naked Latin farce and dresses it in rich brocades.

The romantic humanity of Shakespeare is finely illustrated by every one of the additions and modifications which make "The Comedy of Errors" what it is. Even the points which are merely indicated add to this impression. For instance, the "Menæchmi" leaves us in doubt, when the curtain falls, as to the future welfare of the characters; we feel that they may easily slip back into unseemly wrangle and nefarious intrigue. Their imbroglio has been excessively diverting, but it has led to

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no distinct moral issue. But when "The Comedy of Errors" closes, it has diverted us still more than the "Menæchmi" did, and we feel in addition that its confusions have led directly towards peace and repose. There is nothing left uncomfortable and furtive, there is no temptation to return to the wrangling mood. We are convinced that Adriana's shrewishness has been shamed out of her for life; that Luciana will make a perfect consort for Antipholus of Syracuse; that Ægeon and the Abbess — now recognised as the matron Æmilia — will gather their patriarchal family around them in Ephesus, and that all will be tranquillity.

Finally, we must not allow ourselves to fall into the error of overpraising "The Comedy of Errors." It is not a work of the highest order; it is marked by executive faults, tameness in the versification, timidity in the exposition of character, crudity and thinness in the language. It is not one of Shakespeare's great complex masterpieces, glowing and luminous from beginning to end. But it is a charmingly sportive and garrulous farce of his unfinished youth, and it has the extreme importance of being that work in which, more than anywhere else, we can watch the technical development of his style and the evidences of his growing skill and selective self-criticism.

EDMUND GOSSE.

# **THE COMEDY OF ERRORS**



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

SOLINUS, duke of Ephesus.

ÆGEON, a merchant of Syracuse.

ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, } twin brothers, and sons to  
ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, } Ægeon and Æmilia.

DROMIO of Ephesus, } twin brothers, and attendants on  
DROMIO of Syracuse, } the two Antipholuses.

BALTHAZAR, a merchant.

ANGELO, a goldsmith.

First Merchant, friend to Antipholus of Syracuse.

Second Merchant, to whom Angelo is a debtor.

PINCH, a schoolmaster.

ÆMILIA, wife to Ægeon, an abbess at Ephesus.

ADRIANA, wife to Antipholus of Ephesus.

LUCIANA, her sister.

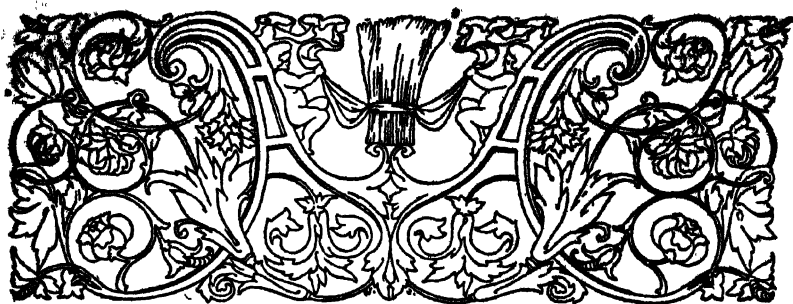
LUCE, servant to Adriana.

A Courtezan.

Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants.

SCENE — *Ephesus.*

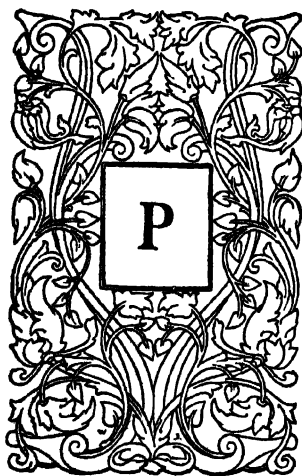
<sup>1</sup> This play was first printed in the First Folio. The *Dramatis Personæ* was first supplied in Nicholas Rowe's edition of 1709.



ACT FIRST—SCENE I  
A HALL IN THE DUKE'S PALACE

*Enter DUKE, ÆGEON, Gaoler, Officers, and other Attendants*

ÆGEON



PROCEED, SOLINUS, TO  
procure my fall,  
And by the doom of death end  
woes and all.

DUKE. Merchant of Syra-  
cusa, plead no more ;  
I am not partial to infringe our  
laws :

The enmity and discord which  
of late

Sprung from the rancorous out-  
rage of your duke

To merchants, our well-dealing  
countrymen,

Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,  
Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,

<sup>4</sup> *partial*] inclined.

<sup>8</sup> *guilders*] money. Cf. IV, i, 4, *infra*. The word reproduces the Dutch

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT I.

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Excludes all pity from our threatening looks.

10

For, since the mortal and intestine jars

'Twixt thy seditious countrymen and us,

It hath in solemn synods been decreed,

Both by the Syracusians and ourselves,

To admit no traffic to our adverse towns :

Nay, more,

If any born at Ephesus be seen

At any Syracusian marts and fairs ;

Again : if any Syracusian born

Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,

20

His goods confiscate to the duke's dispose ;

Unless a thousand marks be levied,

To quit the penalty and to ransom him.

Thy substance, valued at the highest rate,

Cannot amount unto a hundred marks ;

Therefore by law thou art condemn'd to die.

ÆGE. Yet this my comfort : when your words are  
done,

My woes end likewise with the evening sun.

DUKE. Well, Syracusian, say, in brief, the cause

Why thou departed'st from thy native home,

30

And for what cause thou camest to Ephesus.

ÆGE. A heavier task could not have been im-  
posed

Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable :

Yet, that the world may witness that my end

"gulden," a standard coin of the Low Countries, a silver piece  
worth about 40 cents, or 1s. 8d.

## SCENE I\* THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence,  
I'll utter what my sorrow gives me leave.  
In Syracuse was I born ; and wed  
Unto a woman, happy but for me,  
And by me, had not our hap been had.  
With her I lived in joy ; our wealth increased 40  
By prosperous voyages I often made  
To Epidamnum ; till my factor's death,  
And the great care of goods at random left,  
Drew me from kind embracements of my spouse :  
From whom my absence was not six months old,  
Before herself, almost at fainting under  
The pleasing punishment that women bear,  
Had made provision for her following me,  
And soon and safe arrived where I was.  
There had she not been long but she became 50  
A joyful mother of two goodly sons ;  
And, which was strange, the one so like the other  
As could not be distinguish'd but by names.  
That very hour, and in the self-same inn,  
A meaner woman was delivered  
Of such a burthen, male twins, both alike :  
Those, for their parents were exceeding poor,  
I bought, and brought up to attend my sons.  
My wife, not meanly proud of two such boys,

---

35 *nature*] natural affection.

42 *Epidamnum*] The Folio reading is *Epidamium*. *Epidamnum*, which is Pope's correction, has been generally adopted. It is the form found in W. W's translation of Plautus' *Menæchmi*, 1595. The correct name of the town is "Epidamnos."

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT I

Made daily motions for our home return : 80  
Unwilling I agreed ; alas ! too soon  
We came aboard.  
A league from Epidamnum had we sail'd,  
Before the always-wind-obeying deep  
Gave any tragic instance of our harm :  
But longer did we not retain much hope ;  
For what obscured light the heavens did grant  
Did but convey unto our fearful minds  
A doubtful warrant of immediate death ;  
Which though myself would gladly have embraced, 70  
Yet the incessant weepings of my wife,  
Weeping before for what she saw must come,  
And piteous plainings of the pretty babes,  
That mourn'd for fashion, ignorant what to fear,  
Forced me to seek delays for them and me.  
And this it was, for other means was none :  
The sailors sought for safety by our boat,  
And left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us :  
My wife, more careful for the latter-born,  
Had fasten'd him unto a small spare mast, 80  
Such as seafaring men provide for storms ;  
To him one of the other twins was bound,  
Whilst I had been like heedful of the other :  
The children thus disposed, my wife and I,  
Fixing our eyes on whom our care was fix'd,  
Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast ;  
And floating straight, obedient to the stream,  
Was carried towards Corinth, as we thought.  
At length the sun, gazing upon the earth,

## SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Dispersed those vapours that offended us ; 90  
And, by the benefit of his wished light,  
The seas wax'd calm, and we discovered  
Two ships from far making amain to us,  
Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this :  
But ere they came, — O, let me say no more !  
Gather the sequel by that went before.

DUKE. Nay, forward, old man ; do not break off so ;  
For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

ÆGE. O, had the gods done so, I had not now 100  
Worthily term'd them merciless to us !  
For, ere the ships could meet by twice five leagues,  
We were encounter'd by a mighty rock ;  
Which being violently borne upon,  
Our helpful ship was splitted in the midst ;  
So that, in this unjust divorce of us,  
Fortune had left to both of us alike  
What to delight in, what to sorrow for.  
Her part, poor soul ! seeming as burdened  
With lesser weight, but not with lesser woe,  
Was carried with more speed before the wind ; 110  
And in our sight they three were taken up  
By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.  
At length, another ship had seized on us ;  
And, knowing whom it was their hap to save,  
Gave healthful welcome to their shipwreck'd guests ;  
And would have reft the fishers of their prey,  
Had not their bark been very slow of sail ;  
And therefore homeward did they bend their course.  
Thus have you heard me sever'd from my bliss ;

# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS      ACT I

That by misfortunes was my life prolong'd, 190  
To tell sad stories of my own mishaps.

DUKE. And, for the sake of them thou sorrowest for,  
Do me the favour to dilate at full  
What hath befall'n of them and thee till now.

ÆGE. My youngest boy, and yet my eldest care,  
At eighteen years became inquisitive  
After his brother : and importuned me  
That his attendant — so his case was like,  
Reft of his brother, but retain'd his name —  
Might bear him company in the quest of him : 190  
Whom whilst I labour'd of a love to see,  
I hazarded the loss of whom I loved.

Five summers have I spent in farthest Greece,  
Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia,  
And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus ;  
Hopeless to find, yet loath to leave unsought  
Or that, or any place that harbours men.  
But here must end the story of my life ;  
And happy were I in my timely death,  
Could all my travels warrant me they live. 140

DUKE. Hapless Ægeon, whom the fates have mark'd  
To bear the extremity of dire mishap !  
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,

125 *My youngest boy, etc.*] This does not quite harmonise with other passages of Ægeon's story ; at lines 79 and 110 he describes himself as separated from his "latter-born" son, who is carried away from him along with his wife. The discrepancy is due to Shakespeare's hasty composition.

131 *labour'd of a love*] was troubled by a desire.

## SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,  
Which princes, would they, may not disannul,  
My soul should sue as advocate for thee.  
But, though thou art adjudged to the death,  
And passed sentence may not be recall'd  
But to our honour's great disparagement,  
Yet will I favour thee in what I can.  
Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day  
To seek thy help by beneficial help :  
Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus ;  
Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,  
And live ; if no, then thou art doom'd to die.  
Gaoler, take him to thy custody.

150

GAOL. I will, my lord.

ÆGE. Hopeless and helpless doth Ægeon wend,  
But to procrastinate his lifeless end. [Exeunt.]

## SCENE II — THE MART

*Enter* ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse, DROMIO of Syracuse,  
and First Merchant

FIRST MER. Therefore give out you are of Epi-  
damnum,  
Lest that your goods too soon be confiscate.  
This very day a Syracusian merchant  
Is apprehended for arrival here ;  
And, not being able to buy out his life,  
According to the statute of the town,





## SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

ANT. S. He that commends me to mine own content

Commends me to the thing I cannot get.

I to the world am like a drop of water,

That in the ocean seeks another drop ;

Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,

Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself :

So I, to find a mother and a brother,

In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.

40

*Enter DROMIO of Ephesus*

Here comes the almanac of my true date.

What now ? how chance thou art return'd so soon ?

DRO. E. Return'd so soon ! rather approach'd too late :

The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit ;

The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell ;

My mistress made it one upon my cheek :

She is so hot, because the meat is cold ;

The meat is cold, because you come not home ;

You come not home, because you have no stomach ;

You have no stomach, having broke your fast ;

But we, that know what 't is to fast and pray,

Are penitent for your default to-day.

50

38 *confounds*] destroys, loses.

41 *almanac . . . date*] The speaker was born at the same hour as the newcomer, who is therefore called the indicator of the other's true date of birth.

52 *Are penitent*] Suffer penance (by fasting and praying).

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS \* ACT I

ANT. S. Stop in your wind, sir: tell me this, I pray:  
Where have you left the money that I gave you?

DRO. E. O,—sixpence, that I had o' Wednesday last  
To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper?  
The saddler had it, sir; I kept it not.

ANT. S. I am not in a sportive humour now:  
Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?  
We being strangers here, how darest thou trust  
So great a charge from thine own custody? 60

DRO. E. I pray you, jest, sir, as you sit at dinner:  
I from my mistress come to you in post;  
If I return, I shall be post indeed,  
For she will score your fault upon my pate.  
Methinks your maw, like mine, should be your clock,  
And strike you home without a messenger.

ANT. S. Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of  
season;  
Reserve them till a merrier hour than this.  
Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee? 70

DRO. E. To me, sir? why, you gave no gold to me.

ANT. S. Come on, sir knave, have done your foolish-  
ness,  
And tell me how thou hast disposed thy charge.

DRO. E. My charge was but to fetch you from the  
mart

63-65 *post . . . score*] A post usually stood in the middle of a shop or  
a tavern, and on it the scores of customers were chalked up. The  
words in line 63, *in post*, which suggest the quibble, mean "in haste."  
66 *clock*] Pope's emendation of the original reading *cook*.

## SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Home to your house, the Phoenix, sir, to dinner:  
My mistress and her sister stays for you.

ANT. S. Now, as I am a Christian, answer me,  
In what safe place you have bestow'd my money ;  
Or I shall break that merry sconce of yours,  
That stands on tricks when I am undisposed : 80  
Where is the thousand marks thou had'st of me ?

DRO. E. I have some marks of yours upon my pate,  
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders ;  
But not a thousand marks between you both.  
If I should pay your worship those again,  
Perchance you will not bear them patiently.

ANT. S. Thy mistress' marks ? what mistress, slave,  
hast thou ?

DRO. E. Your worship's wife, my mistress at the  
Phoenix ;  
She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,  
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner. 90

ANT. S. What, wilt thou flout me thus unto my face,  
Being forbid ? There, take you that, sir knave.

DRO. E. What mean you, sir ? for God's sake, hold  
your hands !

Nay, an you will not, sir, I'll take my heels. [Exit.

ANT. S. Upon my life, by some device or other  
The villain is o'er-raught of all my money.  
They say this town is full of cozenage ;  
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,

80 *stands on tricks*] indulges in tricks.

96 *o'er-raught*] over-reached, cheated out of, cheated.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS <sup>c</sup> ACT I

---

Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,  
Soul-killing witches that deform the body, 100  
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,  
And many such-like liberties of sin :  
If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner.  
I'll to the Centaur, to go seek this slave  
I greatly fear my money is not safe. [Exit.

---

102 *liberties of sin*] Hanmer reads *libertines*. Steevens explains "licensed offenders." Malone gives the more probable interpretation, "licentious actions."



ACT SECOND—SCENE I  
*THE HOUSE OF ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHEBUS*

ADRIANA

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*



EITHER MY HUSBAND  
nor the slave return'd,  
That in such haste I sent to  
seek his master!

Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.

LUC. Perhaps some merchant  
hath invited him,

And from the mart he's some-  
where gone to dinner.

Good sister, let us dine, and  
never fret:

A man is master of his liberty:  
Time is their master; and when  
they see time,

They'll go or come: if so, be patient, sister.

ADR. Why should their liberty than ours be more? 10

LUC. Because their business still lies out o' door.

ADR. Look, when I serve him so, he takes it ill.

LUC. O, know he is the bridle of your will.

**THE COMEDY OF ERRORS    ACT II**

**ADR.** There's none but asses will be bridled so.

Luc. Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.  
There 's nothing situate under heaven's eye  
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky :  
The beasts, the fishes, and the winged fowls,  
Are their males' subjects and at their controls :  
Men more divine, the masters of all these,  
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,  
Indued with intellectual sense and souls,  
Of more pre-eminence than fish and fowls,  
Are masters to their females, and their lords :  
Then let your will attend on their accords.

**ADR. This servitude makes you to keep unwed.**

**LUC.** Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.

ADR. But, were you wedded, you would bear some sway.

**LUC.** Ere I learn love, I 'll practise to obey.

**ADR.** How if your husband start some other where? 30

**LUC.** Till he come home again, I would forbear.

ADR. Patience unmoved! no marvel though she  
pause;

**They can be meek that have no other cause.**

**A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,**

**We bid be quiet when we hear it cry ;**

But were we burden'd with like weight of pain,

**As much, or more, we should ourselves complain :**

So thou, that hast no unkind mate to grieve thee,

With urging helpless patience wouldst relieve me ;

34-37] The identical sentiment is repeated in *Much Ado*, V, i, 20-31.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

But, if thou live to see like right bereft,  
This fool-begg'd patience in thee will be left.

40

LUC. Well, I will marry one day, but to try.  
Here comes your man ; now is your husband nigh.

*Enter DROMIO of Ephesus*

ADR. Say, is your tardy master now at hand ?

DRO. E. Nay, he's at two hands with me, and that  
my two ears can witness.

ADR. Say, didst thou speak with him ? know'st thou  
his mind ?

DRO. E. Ay, ay, he told his mind upon mine ear :  
Beshrew his hand, I scarce could understand it.

LUC. Spake he so doubtfully, thou couldst not feel <sup>so</sup>  
his meaning ?

DRO. E. Nay, he struck so plainly, I could too well  
feel his blows ; and withal so doubtfully, that I could  
scarce understand them.

ADR. But say, I prithee, is he coming home ?  
It seems he hath great care to please his wife.

DRO. E. Why, mistress, sure my master is horn-mad.

ADR. Horn-mad, thou villain !

DRO. E. I mean not cuckold-mad ;  
But, sure, he is stark mad.

41 *fool-begg'd*] admittedly or notoriously foolish. There is an allusion  
to the custom of begging or petitioning for the guardianship of  
any one who was admitted to be a fool. Here patience is personi-  
fied as the "fool" whose guardianship is begged.

54 *understand*] stand under : a poor quibble. Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, v, 28.



# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT II

When I desired him to come home to dinner, 60  
 He ask'd me for a thousand marks in gold :  
 " 'T is dinner-time," quoth I ; " My gold ! " quoth he :  
 " Your meat doth burn," quoth I ; " My gold ! " quoth he :  
 " Will you come home?" quoth I ; " My gold ! " quoth he,  
 " Where is the thousand marks I gave thee, villain ?"  
 " The pig," quoth I, " is burn'd ; " " My gold ! " quoth he :  
 " My mistress, sir," quoth I ; " Hang up thy mistress !  
 I know not thy mistress ; out on thy mistress !"

LUC. Quoth who ?

DRO. E. Quoth my master : 70  
 " I know," quoth he, " no house, no wife, no mistress."  
 So that my errand, due unto my tongue,  
 I thank him, I bare home upon my shoulders ;  
 For, in conclusion, he did beat me there.

ADR. Go back again, thou slave, and fetch him home.

DRO. E. Go back again, and be new beaten home ?  
 For God's sake, send some other messenger.

ADR. Back, slave, or I will break thy pate across.

DRO. E. And he will bless that cross with other  
 beating :

Between you I shall have a holy head. 80

ADR. Hence, prating peasant ! fetch thy master home.

DRO. E. Am I so round with you as you with me,  
 That like a football you do spurn me thus ?

80 *holy head*] The quibble on *cross* suggests the punning use of *holy* in the sense of "full of holes."

82 *round*] blunt, outspoken. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, i, 191. The word quibblingly suggests *football* and *leather* in 83 and 85.

## SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

You spurn me hence, and he will spurn me hither :  
If I last in this service, you must case me in leather.

[*Exit.*

LUC. Fie, how impatience loureth in your face !

ADR. His company must do his minions grace,  
Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.

Hath homely age the alluring beauty took

From my poor cheek ? then he hath wasted it :

90

Are my discourses dull ? barren my wit ?

If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd,

Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard :

Do their gay vestments his affections bait ?

That's not my fault ; he's master of my state :

What ruins are in me that can be found,

By him not ruin'd ? then is he the ground

Of my defeatures. My decayed fair

A sunny look of his would soon repair :

But, too unruly deer, he breaks the pale,

100

And feeds from home ; poor I am but his stale.

LUC. Self-harming jealousy ! fie, beat it hence !

ADR. Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.

I know his eye doth homage elsewhere ;

88 *starve for a merry look*] Cf. *Sonnets*, xlvii, 3, "famish'd for a look," and lxxv, 10, "starved for a look."

98 *defeatures*] disfigurements. Shakespeare is the only Elizabethan writer who uses the word in this sense, and that only here, in V, i, 299, *injure*, and in *Venus and Adonis*, 736.

*fair*] beauty. This substantival use of the adjective is common in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. Cf. *Sonnets*, xvi, 11 ; xviii, 7 and 10 ; lxviii, 3 ; and lxxxiii, 2.

Or else what lets it but he would be here ?  
 Sister, you know he promised me a chain ;  
 Would that alone, alone he would detain,  
 So he would keep fair quarter with his bed !  
 I see the jewel best enamelled  
 Will lose his beauty ; yet the gold bides still,  
 That others touch, and often touching will  
 Wear gold : and no man that hath a name,  
 By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.  
 Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,  
 I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.

110

Luc. How many fond fools serve mad jealousy !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — A PUBLIC PLACE

*Enter* ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse

ANT. S. The gold I gave to Dromio is laid up  
 Safe at the Centaur ; and the heedful slave  
 Is wander'd forth, in care to seek me out  
 By computation and mine host's report.

107 *alone, alone*] Thus the Second Folio, which substitutes the second *alone* for the two words *a loue* of the First Folio. Though some emendation of the original text is essential, it is doubtful if the Second Folio reading be correct. Hanmer read *alone, alas*.

110-112 *yet the gold . . . gold*] Thus in the First Folio, save for Theobald's correction of *Wear* for *Where* (l. 112). The meaning seems to be that gold which is touched or tested lasts long, and at the same time much touching or handling wears gold down.

113 *By falsehood*] Theobald's reading, *But falsehood*, makes better sense.

SCENE II • THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

I could not speak with Dromio since at first  
I sent him from the mart. See, here he comes.

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

How now, sir ! is your merry humour alter'd ?  
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.  
You know no Centaur ? you received no gold ?  
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner ? 10  
My house was at the Phoenix ? Wast thou mad,  
That thus so madly thou didst answer me ?

DRO. S. What answer, sir ? when spake I, such a word ?

ANT. S. Even now, even here, not half an hour since.

DRO. S. I did not see you since you sent me hence,  
Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.

ANT. S. Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,  
And told'st me of a mistress and a dinner ;  
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeased.

DRO. S. I am glad to see you in this merry vein : 20  
What means this jest ? I pray you, master, tell me.

ANT. S. Yea, dost thou jeer and flout me in the teeth ?

Think'st thou I jest ? Hold, take thou that, and that.

*[Beating him.]*

DRO. S. Hold, sir, for God's sake ! now your jest is earnest :

Upon what bargain do you give it me ?

ANT. S. Because that I familiarly sometimes  
Do use you for my fool, and chat with you,

# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT II

Your sauciness will jest upon my love,  
 And make a common of my serious hours.  
 When the sun shines let foolish gnats make sport, 30  
 But creep in crannies when he hides his beams.  
 If you will jest with me, know my aspect,  
 And fashion your demeanour to my looks,  
 Or I will beat this method in your sconce.

DRO. S. Sconce call you it? so you would leave battering, I had rather have it a head: an you use these blows long, I must get a sconce for my head, and insconce it too; or else I shall seek my wit in my shoulders. But, I pray, sir, why am I beaten?

ANT. S. Dost thou not know? 40

DRO. S. Nothing, sir, but that I am beaten.

ANT. S. Shall I tell you why?

DRO. S. Ay, sir, and wherefore; for they say every why hath a wherefore.

ANT. S. Why, first, — for flouting me; and then, wherefore, —

For urging it the second time to me.

DRO. S. Was there ever any man thus beaten out of season,

When in the why and the wherefore is neither rhyme nor reason?

Well, sir, I thank you.

ANT. S. Thank me, sir! for what? 50

29 *make a common of*] make ground open to all, intrude upon.

35-38 *sconce . . . insconce*] *Sconce* is used at first for "head" and then for "head covering," or "helmet." Cf. I, ii, 79, *supra*.

38 *seek . . . shoulders*] find my wit in my back, i. e. run away.

## SCENE II\* THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

DRO. S. Marry, sir, for this something that you gave me for nothing.

ANT. S. I'll make you amends next, to give you nothing for something. But say, sir, is it dinner-time?

DRO. S. No, sir: I think the meat wants that I have.

ANT. S. In good time, sir; what's that?

DRO. S. Basting.

ANT. S. Well, sir, then 't will be dry.

DRO. S. If it be, sir, I pray you, eat none of it.

ANT. S. Your reason?

60

DRO. S. Lest it make you cholerick, and purchase me another dry basting.

ANT. S. Well, sir, learn to jest in good time: there's a time for all things.

DRO. S. I durst have denied that, before you were so cholerick.

ANT. S. By what rule, sir?

DRO. S. Marry, sir, by a rule as plain as the plain bald pate of father Time himself.

ANT. S. Let's hear it.

70

DRO. S. There's no time for a man to recover his hair that grows bald by nature.

ANT. S. May he not do it by fine and recovery?

---

61 *cholerick*] Cf. *T. of Shrew*, IV, i, 173-175, for a like reference to the cholerick effects of overcooked meat.

62 *dry basting*] beating that does not draw blood. See *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 263.

73 *fine and recovery*] This phrase is employed again in *M. Wives*, IV, ii, 225, and *Hamlet*, V, i, 115. It is somewhat loosely employed. "Fine" and "recovery" were names of legal processes which rendered ownership absolute and incontestable.

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS 'ACT II

DRO. S. Yes, to pay a fine for a periwig, and recover the lost hair of another man.

ANT. S. Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement ?

DRO. S. Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts : and what he hath scanted men in hair, he hath given them in wit. 80

ANT. S. Why, but there's many a man hath more hair than wit.

DRO. S. Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his hair.

ANT. S. Why, thou didst conclude hairy men plain dealers without wit.

DRO. S. The plainer dealer, the sooner lost : yet he loseth it in a kind of jollity.

ANT. S. For what reason ?

DRO. S. For two ; and sound ones too. 90

ANT. S. Nay, not sound, I pray you.

DRO. S. Sure ones, then.

ANT. S. Nay, not sure, in a thing falsing.

DRO. S. Certain ones, then.

ANT. S. Name them.

DRO. S. The one, to save the money that he spends in tiring ; the other, that at dinner they should not drop in his porridge.

81-82 *more hair than wit*] For further reference to this proverb cf. *Two Gent.*, III, i, 361.

84 *lose his hair*] A symptom of venereal disease. Cf. line 88.

97 *tiring*] dressing. Pope's emendation of the old reading *trying*.

## SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ANT. S. You would all this time have proved there  
is no time for all things. 100

DRO. S. Marry, and did, sir ; namely, no time to recover hair lost by nature.

ANT. S. But your reason was not substantial, why there is no time to recover.

DRO. S. Thus I mend it : Time himself is bald, and therefore to the world's end will have bald followers

ANT. S. I knew 't would be a bald conclusion :  
But, soft ! who wafts us yonder ?

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*

ADR. Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown :  
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects ; 110  
I am not Adriana nor thy wife.

The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow  
That never words were music to thine ear,  
That never object pleasing in thine eye,  
That never touch well welcome to thy hand,  
That never meat sweet-savour'd in thy taste,  
Unless I spake, or look'd, or touch'd, or carved to thee.  
How comes it now, my husband, O, how comes it,  
That thou art then estranged from thyself ?  
Thyself I call it, being strange to me, 120  
That, undividable, incorporate,  
Am better than thy dear self's better part.  
Ah, do not tear away thyself from me !

---

122 *better part*] The soul, as in *Sonnets*, xxxix, 2, lxxiv, 8 : " My spirit is thine, the better part of me."



## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ' ACT II

For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall  
A drop of water in the breaking gulf,  
And take unmingled thence that drop again,  
Without addition or diminishing,  
As take from me thyself, and not me too.  
How dearly would it touch thee to the quick,  
Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious, 130  
And that this body, consecrate to thee,  
By ruffian lust should be contaminate !  
Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me,  
And hurl the name of husband in my face,  
And tear the stain'd skin off my harlot-brow,  
And from my false hand cut the wedding-ring,  
And break it with a deep-divorcing vow ?  
I know thou canst ; and therefore see thou do it.  
I am possess'd with an adulterate blot ;  
My blood is mingled with the crime of lust : 140  
For if we two be one, and thou play false,  
I do digest the poison of thy flesh,  
Being strumpeted by thy contagion.  
Keep, then, fair league and truce with thy true bed ;  
I live distain'd, thou undishonoured.

ANT. S. Plead you to me, fair dame ? I know you  
not :

In Ephesus I am but two hours old,  
As strange unto your town as to your talk ;

145 *distain'd*] The sense requires that this word should have the unusual meaning of "unstained." It ordinarily means "deeply stained," "defiled."

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Who, every word by all my wit being scann'd,  
Wants wit in all one word to understand. 160

LUC. Fie, brother! how the world is changed with  
you!

When were you wont to use my sister thus?  
She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

ANT. S. By Dromio?

DRO. S. By me?

ADR. By thee; and this thou didst return from him,  
That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,  
Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

ANT. S. Did you converse, sir, with this gentle-  
woman?

What is the course and drift of your compact? 160

DRO. S. I, sir? I never saw her till this time.

ANT. S. Villain, thou liest; for even her very words  
Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

DRO. S. I never spake with her in all my life.

ANT. S. How can she thus then call us by our  
names?

Unless it be by inspiration.

ADR. How ill agrees it with your gravity  
To counterfeit thus grossly with your slave,  
Abetting him to thwart me in my mood!  
Be it my wrong you are from me exempt, 170  
But wrong not that wrong with a more contempt.  
Come, I will fasten on this sleeve of thine:  
Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine,  
Whose weakness, married to thy stronger state,  
Makes me with thy strength to communicate:

# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS<sup>c</sup> ACT II

---

If aught possess thee from me, it is dross,  
 Usurping ivy, brier, or idle moss;  
 Who, all for want of pruning, with intrusion  
 Infect thy sap, and live on thy confusion.

ANT. S. To me she speaks; she moves me for her  
 theme: 180

What, was I married to her in my dream?  
 Or sleep I now, and think I hear all this?  
 What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?  
 Until I know this sure uncertainty,  
 I'll entertain the offer'd fallacy.

LUC. Dromio, go bid the servants spread for dinner.

DRO. S. O, for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.  
 This is the fairy land: O spite of spites!  
 We talk with goblins, owls, and sprites:  
 If we obey them not, this will ensue, 190  
 They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

LUC. Why pratest thou to thyself, and answer'st  
 not?

Dromio, thou drone, thou snail, thou slug, thou sot!

DRO. S. I am transformed, master, am not I?

ANT. S. I think thou art in mind, and so am I.

DRO. S. Nay, master, both in mind and in my shape.

ANT. S. Thou hast thine own form.

DRO. S. No, I am an ape.

LUC. If thou art changed to aught, 't is to an ass.

DRO. S. 'T is true; she rides me, and I long for grass.

189 *sprites*] Pope completed the line by inserting *elvish* before *sprites*;  
 the change has been generally adopted.

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

'T is so, I am an ass ; else it could never be 900  
But I should know her as well as she knows me.

ADR. Come, come, no longer will I be a fool,  
To put the finger in the eye and weep,  
Whilst man and master laughs my woes to scorn.  
Come, sir, to dinner. Dromio, keep the gate.  
Husband, I 'll dine above with you to-day,  
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks.  
Sirrah, if any ask you for your master,  
Say he dines forth, and let no creature enter.  
Come, sister. Dromio, play the porter well. 910

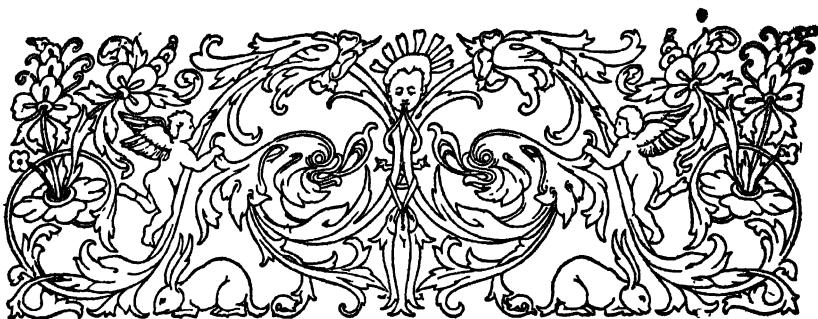
ANT. S. Am I in earth, in heaven, or in hell ?  
Sleeping or waking ? mad or well-advised ?  
Known unto these, and to myself disguised !  
I 'll say as they say, and persevere so,  
And in this midst at all adventures go.

DRO. S. Master, shall I be porter at the gate ?

ADR. Ay ; and let none enter, lest I break your pate.

LUC. Come, come, Antipholus, we dine too late.

[*Exeunt.*]



**ACT THIRD—SCENE I**  
**BEFORE THE HOUSE OF ANTIPHOLUS OF**  
**EPHESUS**

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus, DROMIO of Ephesus, ANGELO,*  
*and BALTHAZAR*

ANTIPHOLUS E.



GOOD SIGNIOR ANGELO,

you must excuse us all;  
 My wife is shrewish when I  
 keep not hours:

Say that I linger'd with you at  
 your shop

To see the making of her car-  
 canet,

And that to-morrow you will  
 bring it home.

But here's a villain that would  
 face me down

He met me on the mart, and  
 that I beat him,

And charged him with a thousand marks in gold,

And that I did deny my wife and house.

Thou drunkard, thou, what didst thou mean by this? 10

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

**DRO. E.** Say what you will, sir, but I know what I know :

That you beat me at the mart, I have your hand to show :

If the skin were parchment, and the blows you gave  
were ink,

**Your own handwriting would tell you what I think.**

ANT. E. I think thou art an ass.

**DRO. E.** Marry, so it doth appear

**By the wrongs I suffer, and the blows I bear.**

I should kick, being kick'd; and, being at that pass,

You would keep from my heels, and beware of an ass.

ANT. E. You're sad, Signior Balthazar: pray God  
our cheer

May answer my good will and your good welcome here. 20

BAL. I hold your dainties cheap, sir, and your welcome dear.

**ANT. E. O, Signior Balthazar, either at flesh or fish,  
A table full of welcome makes scarce one dainty dish.**

BAL. Good meat, sir, is common: that every churl affords.

ANT. E. And welcome more common; for that's  
nothing but words.

**BAL.** Small cheer and great welcome makes a merry feast.

ANT. E. Ay, to a niggardly host and more sparing guest :

But though my cates be mean, take them in good part ;  
Better cheer may you have, but not with better heart.

But, soft ! my door is lock'd. — Go bid them let us in. 30

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS <sup>c</sup> ACT III

---

DRO. E. Maud, Bridget, Marian, Cicely, Gillian, Ginn !

DRO. S. [*Within*] Mome, malt-horse, capon, coxcomb,  
idiot, patch !

Either get thee from the door, or sit down at the hatch.  
Dost thou conjure for wenches, that thou call'st for such  
store,

When one is one too many ? Go get thee from the door.

DRO. E. What patch is made our porter ? My master  
stays in the street.

DRO. S. [*Within*] Let him walk from whence he came,  
lest he catch cold on 's feet.

ANT. E. Who talks within there ? ho, open the door !

DRO. S. [*Within*] Right, sir ; I'll tell you when, an  
you'll tell me wherefore.

ANT. E. Wherefore ? for my dinner : I have not  
dined to-day.

DRO. S. [*Within*] Nor to-day here you must not ;  
come again when you may.

ANT. E. What art thou that keepest me out from  
the house I owe ?

DRO. S. [*Within*] The porter for this time, sir, and  
my name is Dromio.

DRO. E. O villain, thou hast stolen both mine office  
and my name !

The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame.

If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,

Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name, or thy  
name for an ass.

LUCE. [*Within*] What a coil is there, Dromio ? who  
are those at the gate !

# SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

DRO. E. Let my master in, Luce.

LUCE. [Within] 'Faith, no; he comes too late;  
And so tell your master.

DRO. E. O Lord, I must laugh! 80  
Have at you with a proverb;— Shall I set in my staff?

LUCE. [Within] Have at you with another; that's, —  
When? can you tell?

DRO. S. [Within] If thy name be call'd Luce, — Luce,  
thou hast answer'd him well.

ANT. E. Do you hear, you minion? you'll let us in,  
I hope?

LUCE. [Within] I thought to have ask'd you.

DRO. S. [Within] And you said no.

DRO. E. So, come, help: well struck! there was blow  
for blow.

ANT. E. Thou baggage, let me in.

LUCE. [Within] Can you tell for whose sake?

DRO. E. Master, knock the door hard.

LUCE. [Within] Let him knock till it ache.

ANT. E. You'll cry for this, minion, if I beat the  
door down.

LUCE. [Within] What needs all that, and a pair of  
stocks in the town? 60

ADR. [Within] Who is that at the door that keeps all  
this noise?

51 *Shall I set in my staff?* "To set in one's staff" is a proverbial expression meaning "to make one's self at home."

52 *When? can you tell?* Another proverbial expression or catchword, used by way of parrying an awkward question. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, II, i, 48: "Ay, when? canst tell?"



## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS 'ACT III

---

DRO. S. [*Within*] By my troth, your town is troubled  
with unruly boys.

ANT. E. Are you there, wife? you might have come  
before.

ADR. [*Within*] Your wife, sir knave! go get you from  
the door.

DRO. E. If you went in pain, master, this "knave"  
would go sore.

ANG. Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome: we  
would fain have either.

BAL. In debating which was best, we shall part with  
neither.

DRO. E. They stand at the door, master; bid them  
welcome hither.

ANT. E. There is something in the wind, that we  
cannot get in.

DRO. E. You would say so, master, if your garments  
were thin.

70

Your cake here is warm within; you stand here in the  
cold:

It would make a man mad as a buck, to be so bought  
and sold.

ANT. E. Go fetch me something: I'll break ope the  
gate.

---

65 *If you went in pain, etc.*] A poor, quibbling echo of the application of  
the insulting word "knave" to the speaker's master: "You are  
a knave, so, if you felt pain, you would be a sore knave."

67 *part with*] From French "partir," "to go away;" "go away with,"  
"obtain."

72 *bought and sold*] taken in, deceived. Cf. *Rich. III*, V, iii, 304: "For  
Dickon thy master is *bought and sold*."

SCENE I • THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

DRO. S. [*Within*] Break any breaking here, and I'll  
break your knave's pate.

DRO. E. A man may break a word with you, sir ; and  
words are but wind ;

Ay, and break it in your face, so he break it not behind.

DRO. S. [*Within*] It seems thou want'st breaking :  
out upon thee, hind !

DRO. E. Here's too much "out upon thee!" I pray  
thee, let me in.

DRO. S. [*Within*] Ay, when fowls have no feathers,  
and fish have no fin.

ANT. E. Well, I'll break in : go borrow me a crow. 80

DRO. E. A crow without feather? Master, mean  
you so?

For a fish without a fin, there's a fowl without a feather :  
If a crow help us in, sirrah, we'll pluck a crow together.

ANT. E. Go get thee gone ; fetch me an iron crow.

BAL. Have patience, sir : O, let it not be so !

Herein you war against your reputation,

And draw within the compass of suspect

The unviolated honour of your wife.

Once this, — your long experience of her wisdom,

Her sober virtue, years, and modesty, 80

Plead on her part some cause to you unknown ;

And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse

Why at this time the doors are made against you.

Be ruled by me : depart in patience,

---

89 *Once this*] Once for all, in fine, to sum up. This usage is not uncommon, though rare. Malone proposed to read *Own this*.

98 *made against*] "barred against," a common provincial usage.

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS 'ACT III

---

And let us to the Tiger all to dinner ;  
And about evening come yourself alone  
To know the reason of this strange restraint.  
If by strong hand you offer to break in  
Now in the stirring passage of the day,  
A vulgar comment will be made of it, 100  
And that supposed by the common rout  
Against your yet ungalled estimation,  
That may with foul intrusion enter in,  
And dwell upon your grave when you are dead ;  
For slander lives upon succession,  
For ever housed where it gets possession.

ANT. E. You have prevail'd : I will depart in quiet,  
And, in despite of mirth, mean to be merry.  
I know a wench of excellent discourse,  
Pretty and witty ; wild, and yet, too, gentle : 110  
There will we dine. This woman that I mean,  
My wife — but, I protest, without desert —  
Hath oftentimes upbraided me withal :  
To her will we to dinner. [*To Ang.*] Get you home,  
And fetch the chain ; by this I know 't is made :  
Bring it, I pray you, to the Porpentine ;  
For there 's the house : that chain will I bestow —

99–105 *Now . . . succession*] Now in the busy time of the day, when people are most about, adverse comments will be made by the crowd, and censure proceeding from the common people's suppositions, when it is aimed at your hitherto unblemished reputation, may get a firm footing, with all its foulness, and may adhere to your name when you are dead ; for slander is never without heirs to keep up the estate.

108 *in despite of mirth*] in the absence of any just cause for mirth.

## SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Be it for nothing but to spite my wife —  
Upon mine hostess there : good sir, make haste.  
Since mine own doors refuse to entertain me,  
I'll knock elsewhere, to see if they'll disdain me.

190

ANG. I'll meet you at that place some hour hence.

ANT. E. Do so. This jest shall cost me some expense.

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE II — THE SAME

*Enter LUCIANA, with ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse*

LUC. And may it be that you have quite forgot  
A husband's office? shall, Antipholus,  
Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?  
Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?  
If you did wed my sister for her wealth,  
Then for her wealth's sake use her with more kindness :  
Or if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth ;  
Muffle your false love with some show of blindness :  
Let not my sister read it in your eye ;  
Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator ;  
Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty ;  
Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger ;  
Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted ;  
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint ;

10

3 *love-springs*] young shoots of love. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 656 : " This canker that eats up *Love's* tender *spring*."

4 *Shall love, etc.*] Cf. *Sonnet* cxix, 11 : " And *ruin'd love*, when it is *built* anew." Theobald substituted *ruinous* for *ruinate*, the obvious error of the Folio.

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS    ACT III

---

Be secret-false : what need she be acquainted ?

What simple thief brags of his own attain ?

'T is double wrong, to truant with your bed,

And let her read it in thy looks at board :

Shame hath a bastard fame, well managed ;

Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word.

20

Alas, poor women ! make us but believe,

Being compact of credit, that you love us ;

Though others have the arm, show us the sleeve ;

We in your motion turn, and you may move us.

Then, gentle brother, get you in again ;

Comfort my sister, cheer her, call her wife :

'T is holy sport, to be a little vain,

When the sweet breath of flattery conquers strife.

ANT. S. Sweet mistress, — what your name is else,

I know not,

Nor by what wonder you do hit of mine, —

30

Less in your knowledge and your grace you show not

Than our earth's wonder ; more than earth divine

Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak ;

Lay open to my earthy-gross conceit,

Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,

The folded meaning of your words' deceit.

Against my soul's pure truth why labour you

To make it wander in an unknown field ?

Are you a god ? would you create me new ?

Transform me, then, and to your power I'll yield.

40

22 *compact of credit*] compounded, made up entirely, of credulity. Cf.

*Venus and Adonis*, 149 : " Love is a spirit all *compact of fire*."

SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

But if that I am I, then well I know

• Your weeping sister is no wife of mine,  
Nor to her bed no homage do I owe :

Far more, far more to you do I decline.

O, train me not, sweet mermaid, with thy note,

To drown me in thy sister's flood of tears :

Sing, siren, for thyself, and I will dote :

Spread o'er the silver waves thy golden hairs,  
And as a bed I'll take them, and there lie ;

50

And, in that glorious supposition, think  
He gains by death that hath such means to die :

Let Love, being light, be drowned if she sink !

LUC. What, are you mad, that you do reason so ?

ANT. S. Not mad, but mated ; how, I do not know.

LUC. It is a fault that springeth from your eye.

ANT. S. For gazing on your beams, fair sun, being by.

LUC. Gaze where you should, and that will clear  
your sight.

ANT. S. As good to wink, sweet love, as look on  
night.

LUC. Why call you me love ? call my sister so.

ANT. S. Thy sister's sister.

LUC. That's my sister.

ANT. S. No ;

60

It is thyself, mine own self's better part,

54 *Not mad, but mated*] The quibble on "mated" in the double sense of "bewildered" and "having a mate or partner," is common. Cf. V, i, 282, *infra*, and *T. of Shrew*, III, ii, 248, where "mated" and "mad" similarly figure together.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT III

Mine eye's clear eye, my dear heart's dearer heart,  
My food, my fortune, and my sweet hope's aim,  
My sole earth's heaven, and my heaven's claim.

LUC. All this my sister is, or else should be.

ANT. S. Call thyself sister, sweet, for I am thee.  
Thee will I love, and with thee lead my life :  
Thou hast no husband yet, nor I no wife.  
Give me thy hand.

LUC. O, soft, sir ! hold you still :  
I'll fetch my sister, to get her good will. [Exit. 70

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

ANT. S. Why, how now, Dromio ! where runn'st  
thou so fast ?

DRO. S. Do you know me, sir ? am I Dromio ? am  
I your man ? am I myself ?

ANT. S. Thou art Dromio, thou art my man, thou  
art thyself.

DRO. S. I am an ass, I am a woman's man, and be-  
sides myself.

ANT. S. What woman's man ? and how besides  
thyself ?

DRO. S. Marry, sir, besides myself, I am due to a 80  
woman ; one that claims me, one that haunts me, one  
that will have me.

64 *heaven's claim*] all that I claim of heaven.

66 *I am thee*] I identify myself with thee. Capell read, "I aim [*i. e.*  
mean] thee," duplicating "my sweet hope's aim" (l. 63) ; but the  
change does not seem necessary.

SCENE II    THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ANT. S. What claim lays she to thee ?

• DRO. S. Marry, sir, such claim as you would lay to your horse ; and she would have me as a beast : not that, I being a beast, she would have me ; but that she, being a very beastly creature, lays claim to me.

ANT. S. What is she ?

DRO. S. A very reverent body ; ay, such a one as a man may not speak of, without he say Sir-reverence. I 90 have but lean luck in the match, and yet is she a wondrous fat marriage.

ANT. S. How dost thou mean a fat marriage ?

DRO. S. Marry, sir, she 's the kitchen-wench, and all grease ; and I know not what use to put her to, but to make a lamp of her, and run from her by her own light. I warrant, her rags, and the tallow in them, will burn a Poland winter : if she lives till doomsday, she 'll burn a week longer than the whole world.

ANT. S. What complexion is she of ? 100

DRO. S. Swart, like my shoe, but her face nothing like so clean kept : for why she sweats ; a man may go over shoes in the grime of it.

ANT. S. That 's a fault that water will mend.

DRO. S. No, sir, 't is in grain ; Noah's flood could not do it.

ANT. S. What 's her name ?

90 *Sir-reverence*] a vulgar corruption of "save" or "saving your reverence ;" a derivative from the Latin, *salvâ reverentiâ*, i. e. "asking your pardon." Cf. *Much Ado*, III, iv, 32 : "I think you would have me say, *saving your reverence*, a husband."



THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT III

DRO. S. Nell, sir ; but her name and three quarters, that's an ell and three quarters, will not measure her from hip to hip. 110

ANT. S. Then she bears some breadth ?

DRO. S. No longer from head to foot than from hip to hip : she is spherical, like a globe ; I could find out countries in her.

ANT. S. In what part of her body stands Ireland ?

DRO. S. Marry, sir, in her buttocks : I found it out by the bogs.

ANT. S. Where Scotland ?

DRO. S. I found it by the barrenness ; hard in the palm of the hand. 120

ANT. S. Where France ?

DRO. S. In her forehead ; armed and reverted, making war against her heir.

ANT. S. Where England ?

DRO. S. I looked for the chalky cliffs, but I could find no whiteness in them ; but I guess it stood in her chin, by the salt rheum that ran between France and it.

ANT. S. Where Spain ?

DRO. S. 'Faith, I saw it not ; but I felt it hot in her breath. 130

ANT. S. Where America, the Indies ?

123 *heir*] The Second Folio reads *haire*. The quibble refers to the civil war progressing in France at the date of the production of the play, when Henry of Navarre, whom Englishmen regarded as the rightful heir to the French throne, was fighting for the succession.

## SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

DRO. S. Oh, sir, upon her nose, all o'er embellished with rubies, carbuncles, sapphires, declining their rich aspect to the hot breath of Spain ; who sent whole armadoes of caracks to be ballast at her nose.

ANT. S. Where stood Belgia, the Netherlands ?

DRO. S. Oh, sir, I did not look so low. To conclude, this drudge, or diviner, laid claim to me ; called me Dromio ; swore I was assured to her ; told me what privy marks I had about me, as, the mark of my shoulder, the mole in my neck, the great wart on my left arm, that I, amazed, ran from her as a witch : 142

And, I think, if my breast had not been made of faith,  
and my heart of steel,  
She had transform'd me to a curtal dog, and made me  
turn i' the wheel.

ANT. S. Go hie thee presently, post to the road :  
An if the wind blow any way from shore,  
I will not harbour in this town to-night :  
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,  
Where I will walk till thou return to me.  
If every one knows us, and we know none, 150  
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack, and be gone.

DRO. S. As from a bear a man would run for life,  
So fly I from her that would be my wife. [Exit.

ANT. S. There's none but witches do inhabit here ;

135 *ballast*] ballasted, loaded. For this participial form cf. *Hamlet*, III, iv, 207 : "Hoist [i. e. "hoisted"] with his own petar."

144 *curtal . . . wheel*] dog with a docked tail that worked the turnspit in the kitchen.

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS    ACT III

*And therefore 't is high time that I were hence.*  
She that doth call me husband, even my soul  
Doth for a wife abhor. But her fair sister,  
Possess'd with such a gentle sovereign grace,  
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,  
Hath almost made me traitor to myself: 160  
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,  
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

*Enter ANGELO with the chain*

ANG. Master Antipholus, —

ANT. S. Ay, that's my name.

ANG. I know it well, sir: lo, here is the chain.

I thought to have ta'en you at the Porpentine:  
The chain unfinish'd made me stay thus long.

ANT. S. What is your will that I shall do with this?

ANG. What please yourself, sir: I have made it for  
you.

ANT. S. Made it for me, sir! I bespoke it not.

ANG. Not once, nor twice, but twenty times you  
have. 170

Go home with it, and please your wife withal;  
And soon at supper-time I'll visit you,  
And then receive my money for the chain.

ANT. S. I pray you, sir, receive the money now,  
For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

ANG. You are a merry man, sir: fare you well. [*Exit.*]

ANT. S. What I should think of this, I cannot tell:  
But this I think, there's no man is so vain

SCENE II    THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

*That would refuse so fair an offer'd chain.*

*I see a man here needs not live by shifts,*

180

*When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.*

*I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay :*

*If any ship put out, then straight away.*

*[Exit.]*

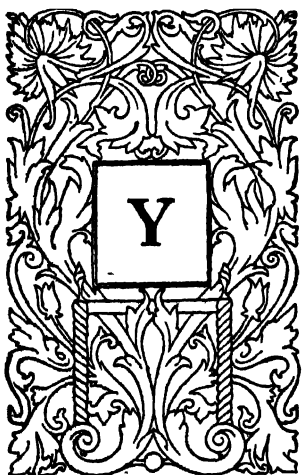


## ACT FOURTH—SCENE I

### A PUBLIC PLACE

*Enter Second Merchant, ANGELO, and an Officer*

#### SECOND MERCHANT



YOU KNOW SINCE PENTE-  
cost the sum is due,

And since I have not much im-  
portuned you ;

Nor now I had not, but that I  
am bound

To Persia, and want guilders for  
my voyage :

Therefore make present satisfac-  
tion,

Or I'll attach you by this officer.

ANG. Even just the sum that  
I do owe to you

Is growing to me by Antipholus ;  
And in the instant that I met with you  
He had of me a chain : at five o'clock  
I shall receive the money for the same.

*4 guilders*] See note on I, i, 8, *supra*.

*8 growing*] accruing. Cf. IV, iv, 129 *et seq.*, *infra*.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Pleaseth you walk with me down to his house,  
I will discharge my bond, and thank you too.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO of Ephesus  
from the courtesan's*

OFF. That labour may you save : see where he comes.

ANT. E. While I go to the goldsmith's house, go  
thou

And buy a rope's end : that will I bestow

Among my wife and her confederates,

For locking me out of my doors by day.

But, soft ! I see the goldsmith. Get thee gone ;

Buy thou a rope, and bring it home to me.

20

DRO. E. I buy a thousand pound a year : I buy a  
rope. *[Exit.]*

ANT. E. A man is well help up that trusts to you :

I promised your presence and the chain ;

But neither chain nor goldsmith came to me.

Belike you thought our love would last too long,

If it were chain'd together, and therefore came not.

ANG. Saving your merry humour, here's the note

How much your chain weighs to the utmost carat,

The fineness of the gold, and chargeful fashion,

Which doth amount to three odd ducats more

30

Than I stand debted to this gentleman :

I pray you, see him presently discharged,

For he is bound to sea, and stays but for it.

---

21 *I buy . . . rope*] Dromio means that the purchase of a rope, where-  
with to execute his master's scheme of vengeance, is as grateful  
to him as the requisition of a large annuity.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS Act IV

ANT. E. I am not furnish'd with the present money ;  
Besides, I have some business in the town.  
Good signior, take the stranger to my house,  
And with you take the chain, and bid my wife  
Disburse the sum on the receipt thereof :  
Perchance I will be there as soon as you.

ANG. Then you will bring the chain to her yourself? 40

ANT. E. No ; bear it with you, lest I come not time  
enough.

ANG. Well, sir, I will. Have you the chain about  
you ?

ANT. E. And if I have not, sir, I hope you have ;  
Or else you may return without your money.

ANG. Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain :  
Both wind and tide stays for this gentleman,  
And I, to blame, have held him here too long.

ANT. E. Good Lord ! you use this dalliance to excuse  
Your breach of promise to the Porpentine.  
I should have chid you for not bringing it, 50  
But, like a shrew, you first begin to brawl.

SEC. MER. The hour steals on ; I pray you, sir,  
dispatch.

ANG. You hear how he importunes me ; — the chain !

ANT. E. Why, give it to my wife, and fetch your  
money.

ANG. Come, come, you know I gave it you even now.  
Either send the chain, or send me by some token.

56 *send me by some token*] send me furnished with some token by way  
of warrant.

**SCENE THE COMEDY OF ERRORS**

---

**ANT. E.** Fie, now you run this humour out of breath.  
Come, where's the chain? I pray you, let me see it.

**SEC. MER.** My business cannot brook this dalliance.  
**Good sir, say whether you'll answer me or no :** 60  
**If not, I'll leave him to the officer.**

**ANT. E.** I answer you! what should I answer you?

**ANG.** The money that you owe me for the chain.

**ANT. E.** I owe you none till I receive the chain.

**ANG.** You know I gave it you half an hour since.

**ANT. E.** You gave me none: you wrong me much  
to say so.

**ANG.** You wrong me more, sir, in denying it:  
**Consider how it stands upon my credit.**

**SEC. MER.** Well, officer, arrest him at my suit.

**OFF.** I do; and charge you in the duke's name to 70  
obey me.

**ANG.** This touches me in reputation.  
**Either consent to pay this sum for me,**  
**Or I attach you by this officer.**

**ANT. E.** Consent to pay thee that I never had!  
**Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou darest.**

**ANG.** Here is thy fee; arrest him, officer.  
**I would not spare my brother in this case,**  
**If he should scorn me so apparently.**

**OFF.** I do arrest you, sir: you hear the suit. 80

**ANT. E.** I do obey thee till I give thee bail.  
**But, sirrah, you shall buy this sport as dear**  
**As all the metal in your shop will answer.**

**ANG.** Sir, sir, I shall have law in Ephesus,  
**To your notorious shame; I doubt it not.**



## ACT IV

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse, from the bay*

90

**What ship of Epidamnum stays for me ?**

**DRO. Š.** A ship you sent me to, to hire waftage.

ANT. E. Thou drunken slave, I sent thee for a rope,  
And told thee to what purpose and what end.

100

ANT. E. I will debate this matter at more leisure,  
And teach your ears to list me with more heed.  
To Adriana, villain, hie thee straight :  
Give her this key, and tell her, in the desk  
That's cover'd o'er with Turkish tapestry  
There is a purse of ducats ; let her send it :  
Tell her I am arrested in the street,

94-95 *sheep . . . ship*] For confusion in pronunciation of these words, see note on *L. L. L.*, II, i, 218.

99 *a rope's end*] Steevens completed the metre by inserting *sir* after *end*, but Malone deemed *rope's* a dissyllable.

## SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

And that shall bail me : hie thee, slave, be gone !  
On, officer, to prison till it come.

[*Exeunt Sec. Merchant, Angelo, Officer, and Ant. E.*

DRO. S. To Adriana ! that is where we dined, 110  
Where Dowsabel did claim me for her husband :  
She is too big, I hope, for me to compass.  
Thither I must, although against my will,  
For servants must their masters' minds fulfil. [*Exit.*

### SCENE II — THE HOUSE OF ANTIPHOLUS OF EPHESUS

*Enter ADRIANA and LUCIANA*

ADR. Ah, Luciana, did he tempt thee so ?  
Mightst thou perceive austerely in his eye  
That he did plead in earnest ? yea or no ?  
Look'd he or red or pale, or sad or merrily ?  
What observation madest thou, in this case,  
Of his heart's meteors tilting in his face ?

LUC. First he denied you had in him no right.

ADR. He meant he did me none ; the more my  
spite.

LUC. Then swore he that he was a stranger here.

ADR. And true he swore, though yet forsworn he  
were. 10

LUC. Then pleaded I for you.

---

111 *Dowsabel*] A common name for a country wench.

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

ADR. And what said he ?

LUC. That love I begg'd for you he begg'd of me.

ADR. With what persuasion did he tempt thy love ?

LUC. With words that in an honest suit might move,  
First he did praise my beauty, then my speech.

ADR. Didst speak him fair ?

LUC. Have patience, I beseech.

ADR. I cannot, nor I will not, hold me still ;  
My tongue, though not my heart, shall have his will.  
He is deformed, crooked, old, and sere,  
Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere ;  
Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind ;  
Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

90

LUC. Who would be jealous, then, of such a one ?  
No evil lost is wail'd when it is gone.

ADR. Ah, but I think him better than I say,  
And yet would herein others' eyes were worse.

Far from her nest the lapwing cries away :

My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse.

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

DRO. S. Here ! go ; the desk, the purse ! sweet, now,  
make haste.

LUC. How hast thou lost thy breath ?

DRO. S. By running fast. 30

ADR. Where is thy master, Dromio ? is he well ?

27 *Far from her nest, etc.*] A very common proverbial expression. Cf. Lyly's *Campaspe*, II, ii, 12, 13 : "You resemble the lapwing, who crieth most where her nest is not."

## SCENE II THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

DRO. S. No, he's in Tartar limbo, worse than hell.  
 A devil in an everlasting garment hath him ;  
 One whose hard heart is button'd up with steel ;  
 A fiend, a fury, pitiless and rough ;  
 A wolf, nay, worse ; a fellow all in buff ;  
 A back-friend, a shoulder-clapper, one that countermands  
 The passages of alleys, creeks, and narrow lands ;  
 A hound that runs counter, and yet draws dry-foot well ;  
 One that, before the Judgment, carries poor souls to hell. 40

ADR. Why, man, what is the matter ?

DRO. S. I do not know the matter : he is 'rested on  
 the case.

ADR. What, is he arrested ? Tell me at whose suit.

DRO. S. I know not at whose suit he is arrested well ;  
 But he's in a suit of buff which 'rested him, that can  
 I tell.

Will you send him, mistress, redemption, the money in  
 his desk ?

32 *in Tartar limbo*] in gaol.

33 *A devil, etc.*] a bailiff or sergeant, whose buff jerkin was usually made  
 of stuff called "durance," which was reputed never to wear out.

35 *fury*] Theobald's alteration of the old reading *fairy*, which is so  
 often found in the sense of elf or hobgoblin that it might well be  
 retained.

38 *lands*] Possibly *lands* is here identical with "launds," i. e. "glades."  
 The rhyme forbids the acceptance of the alternative reading *lanes*.

39 *A hound that runs counter*] To "run counter" is to run backwards or  
 on a false scent. Here there is a punning reference to the *counter*,  
 i. e. prison whither the sergeant carried his victims. To "draw  
 dry-foot" is to follow the scent on dry ground.

40 *hell*] a cant term for "prison."

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ° ACT IV

---

ADR. Go fetch it, sister. [*Exit Luciana.*] This I wonder at,

That he, unknown to me, should be in debt.

Tell me, was he arrested on a band?

DRO. S. Not on a band, but on a stronger thing; 50  
A chain, a chain! Do you not hear it ring?

ADR. What, the chain?

DRO. S. No, no, the bell: 't is time that I were gone:  
It was two ere I left him, and now the clock strikes one.

ADR. The hours come back! that did I never hear.

DRO. S. O, yes; if any hour meet a sergeant, 'a  
turns back for very fear.

ADR. As if Time were in debt! how fondly dost  
thou reason!

DRO. S. Time is a very bankrupt, and owes more  
than he's worth to season.

Nay, he's a thief too: have you not heard men say,

That Time comes stealing on by night and day? 60

If Time be in debt and theft, and a sergeant in the way,  
Hath he not reason to turn back an hour in a day?

*Re-enter LUCIANA with a purse*

ARD. Go, Dromio; there's the money, bear it straight;

And bring thy master home immediately.

Come, sister: I am press'd down with conceit, —

Conceit, my comfort and my injury. [*Exeunt.*]

---

49 *band*] bond. This form of the word is common, and the quibbling  
use of it, though feeble, is intelligible.

58 *season*] opportunity.

65 *conceit*] anxious thought.

## SCENE III<sup>1</sup> THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

### SCENE III — A PUBLIC PLACE

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse*

ANT. S. There's not a man I meet but doth salute  
me  
As if I were their well-acquainted friend ;  
And every one doth call me by my name.  
Some tender money to me ; some invite me ;  
Some other give me thanks for kindnesses ;  
Some offer me commodities to buy :  
Even now a tailor call'd me in his shop,  
And show'd me silks that he had bought for me,  
And therewithal took measure of my body.  
Sure, these are but imaginary wiles,  
And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here.

10

*Enter DROMIO of Syracuse*

DRO. S. Master, here's the gold you sent me for.  
What, have you got the picture of old Adam new-  
apparelled ?

ANT. S. What gold is this ? what Adam dost thou  
mean ?

DRO. S. Not that Adam that kept the Paradise, but

<sup>11</sup> *Lapland sorcerers*] The inhabitants of Lapland were commonly reputed to be sorcerers and witches. "Lapland witches," a common expression in Elizabethan writers, figures in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, II, 665.

<sup>13</sup> *have you . . . old Adam*] Theobald reads, *have you got rid of*, etc.

# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

that Adam that keeps the prison: he that goes in the calf's skin that was killed for the Prodigal; he that came behind you, sir, like an evil angel, and bid you forsake your liberty.

ANT. S. I understand thee not.

DRO. S. No? why, 't is a plain case: he that went, <sup>20</sup> like a base-viol, in a case of leather; the man, sir, that, when gentlemen are tired, gives them a sob, and 'rests them; he, sir, that takes pity on decayed men, and gives them suits of durance; he that sets up his rest to do more exploits with his mace than a morris-pike.

ANT. S. What, thou meanest an officer?

DRO. S. Ay, sir, the sergeant of the band; he that brings any man to answer it that breaks his band; one that thinks a man always going to bed, and says, "God give you good rest!" 30

ANT. S. Well, sir, there rest in your foolery. Is there any ship puts forth to-night? may we be gone?

DRO. S. Why, sir, I brought you word an hour since, that the bark Expedition put forth to-night; and then were you hindered by the sergeant, to tarry for the hoy

---

Dromio's inquiry is clearly equivalent to "What has become of the sergeant?" Dromio is asking in quibbling fashion where the stout corporeal presence of old leather-clad Adam, as he playfully calls the sergeant, has got to.

<sup>22</sup> *gives . . . sob*] causes them a convulsive sigh. This is the reading of the Folios, which Rowe changed to *fob*, assigning to that word the unsupported meaning of "tap," or "light blow."

<sup>24</sup> *durance*] See note on IV, ii, 33. There is a quibble on the sense of *durance*, i. e. prison. The word also means cloth that does not wear out.

SCENE III THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Delay. Here are the angels that you sent for to deliver you.

ANT. S. The fellow is distract, and so am I ;  
And here we wander in illusions :  
Some blessed power deliver us from hence !

*Enter a Courtezan*

COUR. Well met, well met, Master Antipholus, 40  
I see, sir, you have found the goldsmith now :  
Is that the chain you promised me to-day ?

ANT. S. Satan, avoid ! I charge thee, tempt me not.

DRO. S. Master, is this Mistress Satan ?

ANT. S. It is the devil.

DRO. S. Nay, she is worse, she is the devil's dam ;  
and here she comes in the habit of a light wench : and  
thereof comes that the wenches say, " God damn me ;"  
that's as much to say, " God make me a light wench."  
It is written, they appear to men like angels of light : 50  
light is an effect of fire, and fire will burn ; ergo, light  
wenches will burn. Come not near her.

COUR. Your man and you are marvellous merry, sir.  
Will you go with me ? We'll mend our dinner here ?

DRO. S. Master, if you do, expect spoon-meat ; or  
bespeak a long spoon.

ANT. S. Why, Dromio ?

DRO. S. Marry, he must have a long spoon that must  
eat with the devil.

54 *We'll mend, etc.*] We'll improve, make some addition to.

56 *a long spoon*] This proverb is alluded to again in the *Tempest*, II, ii, 103.



# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

ANT. S. Avoid then, fiend ! what tell'st thou me of  
supping ? 60

Thou art, as you are all, a sorceress :  
I conjure thee to leave me and be gone.

COUR. Give me the ring of mine you had at dinner,  
Or, for my diamond, the chain you promised,  
And I'll be gone, sir, and not trouble you.

DRO. S. Some devils ask but the parings of one's  
nail,

A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin,  
A nut, a cherry-stone ;  
But she, more covetous, would have a chain.

Master, be wise : an if you give it her, 70  
The devil will shake her chain, and fright us with it.

COUR. I pray you, sir, my ring, or else the chain :  
I hope you do not mean to cheat me so.

ANT. S. Avaunt, thou witch ! Come, Dromio, let  
us go.

DRO. S. "Fly pride," says the peacock : mistress, that  
you know. [*Exeunt Ant. S. and Dro. S.*]

COUR. Now, out of doubt Antipholus is mad,  
Else would he never so demean himself.

A ring he hath of mine worth forty ducats,  
And for the same he promised me a chain :  
Both one and other he denies me now. 80

The reason that I gather he is mad,  
Besides this present instance of his rage,  
Is a mad tale he told to-day at dinner,  
Of his own doors being shut against his entrance.  
Belike his wife, acquainted with his fits,

SCENE IV THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

On purpose shut the doors against his way.  
My way is now to hie home to his house,  
And tell his wife that, being lunatic,  
He rush'd into my house, and took perforce  
My ring away. This course I fittest choose ;  
For forty ducats is too much to lose.

90  
[Exit.]

SCENE IV — A STREET

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and the Officer*

ANT. E. Fear me not, man ; I will not break away :  
I'll give thee, ere I leave thee, so much money,  
To warrant thee, as I am 'rested for.  
My wife is in a wayward mood to-day,  
And will not lightly trust the messenger.  
That I should be attach'd in Ephesus,  
I tell you, 't will sound harshly in her ears.

*Enter DROMIO of Ephesus with a rope's-end*

Here comes my man ; I think he brings the money.  
How now, sir ! have you that I sent you for ?

DRO. E. Here's that, I warrant you, will pay them all. 10

ANT. E. But where's the money ?

DRO. E. Why, sir, I gave the money for the rope.

ANT. E. Five hundred ducats, villain, for a rope ?

DRO. E. I'll serve you, sir, five hundred at the rate.

ANT. E. To what end did I bid thee hie thee home ?

DRO. E. To a rope's-end, sir ; and to that end am I  
returned.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS    ACT IV

---

ANT. E. And to that end, sir, I will welcome you.

[*Beating him.*]

OFF. Good sir, be patient.

DRO. E. Nay, 'tis for me to be patient; I am in  
adversity.

20

OFF. Good now, hold thy tongue.

DRO. E. Nay, rather persuade him to hold his hands.

ANT. E. Thou whoreson, senseless villain!

DRO. E. I would I were senseless, sir, that I might  
not feel your blows.

ANT. E. Thou art sensible in nothing but blows, and  
so is an ass.

DRO. E. I am an ass, indeed; you may prove it by  
my long ears. I have served him from the hour of my  
nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands 30  
for my service but blows. When I am cold, he heats  
me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me with  
beating; I am waked with it when I sleep; raised with  
it when I sit; driven out of doors with it when I go  
from home; welcomed home with it when I return:  
nay, I bear it on my shoulders, as a beggar wont her  
brat; and, I think, when he hath lamed me, I shall beg  
with it from door to door.

ANT. E. Come, go along; my wife is coming yonder.

*Enter* ADRIANA, LUCIANA, *the Courtezan,* and PINCH

DRO. E. Mistress, "respice finem," respect your end;  
or rather, the prophecy like the parrot, "beware the 40  
rope's-end."

40 *the prophecy*] This is the Folio reading. Dyce reads *to prophecy*,  
which somewhat improves the construction, and may be right.

SCENE IV THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

ANT. E. Wilt thou still talk ? [Beating him.]

COUR. How say you now ? is not your husband mad ?

ADR. His incivility confirms no less.

Good Doctor Pinch, you are a conjurer ;

Establish him in his true sense again,

And I will please you what you will demand.

LUC.\* Alas, how fiery and how sharp he looks !

COUR. Mark how he trembles in his ecstasy !

PINCH. Give me your hand, and let me feel your pulse.

ANT. E. There is my hand, and let it feel your ear. so

[Striking him.]

PINCH. I charge thee, Satan, housed within this man,  
To yield possession to my holy prayers,

And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight :

I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven !

ANT. E. Peace, doting wizzard, peace ! I am not mad.

ADR. O, that thou wert not, poor distressed soul !

ANT. E. You minion, you, are these your customers ?  
Did this companion with the saffron face

Revel and feast it at my house to-day,

Whilst upon me the guilty doors were shut, 60

And I denied to enter in my house ?

ADR. O husband, God doth know you dined at  
home ;

Where would you had remain'd until this time,

Free from these slanders and this open shame !

46 *please you*] gratify you by paying.

48 *trembles in his ecstasy*] Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 895 : "Thus stands she in a trembling ecstasy."

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS<sup>c</sup> ACT IV

---

ANT. E. Dined at home ! 'Thou villain, what sayest thou ?

DRO. E. Sir, sooth to say, you did not dine at home.

ANT. E. Were not my doors lock'd up, and I shut out ?

DRO. E. Perdie, your doors were lock'd, and you shut out.

ANT. E. And did not she herself revile me there ?

DRO. E. Sans fable, she herself reviled you there. 70

ANT. E. Did not her kitchen-maid rail, taunt, and scorn me ?

DRO. E. Certes, she did ; the kitchen-vestal scorn'd you.

ANT. E. And did not I in rage depart from thence ?

DRO. E. In verity you did ; my bones bear witness,

That since have felt the vigour of his rage.

ADR. Is 't good to soothe him in these contraries ?

PINCH. It is no shame : the fellow finds his vein,  
And, yielding to him, humours well his frenzy.

ANT. E. Thou hast suborn'd the goldsmith to arrest me.

ADR. Alas, I sent you money to redeem you, 80  
By Dromio here, who came in haste for it.

DRO. E. Money by me ! heart and good-will you might ;

But surely, master, not a rag of money.

ANT. E. Went'st not thou to her for a purse of ducats ?

SCENE IV THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

ADR. He came to me, and I deliver'd it.

LUC. And I am witness with her that she did.

DRO. E. God and the rope-maker bear me witness  
That I was sent for nothing but a rope!

PINCH. Mistress, both man and master is possessor'd;

I know it by their pale and deadly looks :

90

They must be bound, and laid in some dark room.

ANT. E. Say, wherefore didst thou lock me forth  
to-day?

And why dost thou deny the bag of gold?

ADR. I did not, gentle husband, lock thee forth.

DRO. E. And, gentle master, I received no gold;  
But I confess, sir, that we were lock'd out.

ADR. Dissembling villain, thou speak'st false in both.

ANT. E. Dissembling harlot, thou art false in all,  
And art confederate with a damned pack

To make a loathsome abject scorn of me :

100

But with these nails I'll pluck out these false eyes,  
That would behold in me this shameful sport.

*Enter three or four, and offer to bind him. He strives*

ADR. O, bind him, bind him! let him not come  
near me.

PINCH. More company! The fiend is strong within  
him.

LUC. Ay me, poor man, how pale and wan he looks!

ANT. E. What, will you murder me? Thou gaoler,  
thou,

# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ACT IV

I am thy prisoner: wilt thou suffer them  
To make a rescue?

OFF. Masters, let him go :  
He is my prisoner, and you shall not have him.

PINCH. Go bind this man, for he is frantic too. 110  
[*They offer to bind Dro. E.*

ADR. What wilt thou do, thou peevish officer?  
Hast thou delight to see a wretched man  
Do outrage and displeasure to himself?

OFF. He is my prisoner : if I let him go,  
The debt he owes will be required of me.

ADR. I will discharge thee ere I go from thee :  
Bear me forthwith unto his creditor,  
And, knowing how the debt grows, I will pay it.  
Good master doctor, see him safe convey'd  
Home to my house. O most unhappy day ! 120

ANT. E. O most unhappy strumpet !

DRO. E. Master, I am here enter'd in bond for  
you.

ANT. E. Out on thee, villain ! wherefore dost thou  
mad me ?

DRO. E. Will you be bound for nothing ? be mad,  
good master : cry, The devil !

LUC. God help, poor souls, how idly do they talk !

ADR. Go bear him hence. Sister, go you with me.

[*Exeunt all but Adriana, Luciana, Officer and Courtezan.*  
Say now ; whose suit is he arrested at ?

OFF. One Angelo, a goldsmith : do you know  
him ?

ADR. I know the man. What is the sum he owes ? 130

SCENE IV THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

OFF. Two hundred ducats.

ADR. Say, how grows it due?

OFF. Due for a chain your husband had of him.

ADR. He did bespeak a chain for me, but had it not.

COUR. When as your husband, all in rage, to-day  
Came to my house, and took away my ring, —  
The ring I saw upon his finger now, —  
Straight after did I meet him with a chain.

ADR. It may be so, but I did never see it.  
Come, gaoler, bring me where the goldsmith is :  
I long to know the truth hereof at large.

140

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse with his rapier drawn,  
and DROMIO of Syracuse*

LUC. God, for thy mercy ! they are loose again.

ADR. And come with naked swords.

Let's call more help to have them bound again.

OFF. Away ! they'll kill us.

*[Exeunt all but Ant. S. and Dro. S.]*

ANT. S. I see these witches are afraid of swords.

DRO. S. She that would be your wife now ran from  
you.

ANT. S. Come to the Centaur ; fetch our stuff from  
thence :

I long that we were safe and sound aboard.

148

DRO. S. Faith, stay here this night ; they will surely  
do us no harm : you saw they speak us fair, give us  
gold : methinks they are such a gentle nation, that, but



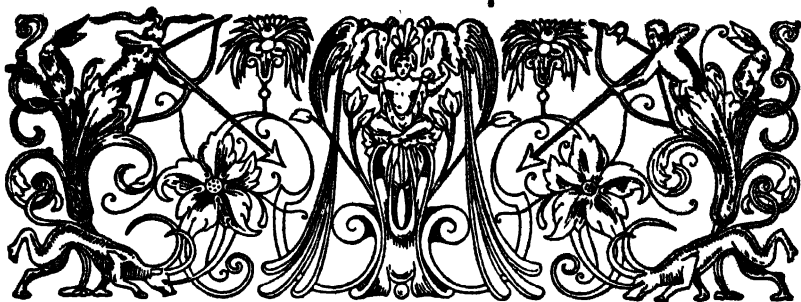
## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS 'ACT IV

for the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage of me, I could find in my heart to stay here still, and turn witch.

ANT. S. I will not stay to-night for all the town ;  
Therefore away, to get our stuff aboard. [Exeunt.

---

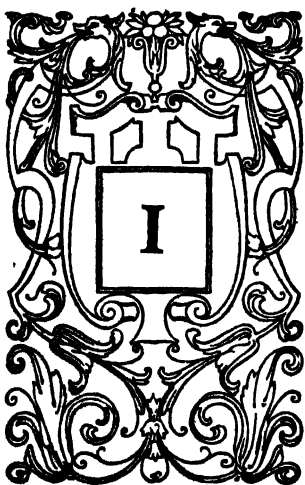
155 *stuff*] baggage. Shakespeare uses the word in this sense only here, in V, i, 408, *infra*, and in *Pericles*, IV, ii, 19. It appears in W. W.'s translation of Plautus' *Menæchmi*: "Ile go strait to the inne, and deliver up my accounts, and all your *stuffe*."



ACT FIFTH—SCENE I  
*A STREET BEFORE A PRIORY*

*Enter Second Merchant and ANGELO*

ANGELO



AM SORRY, SIR, THAT  
 I have hinder'd you ;  
 But, I protest, he had the chain  
 of me,  
 Though most dishonestly he doth  
 deny it.

SEC. MER. How is the man  
 esteem'd here in the city ?

ANG. Of very reverent repu-  
 tation, sir,  
 Of credit infinite, highly beloved,  
 Second to none that lives here  
 in the city :

His word might bear my wealth at any time.

SEC. MER. Speak softly : yonder, as I think, he walks.

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse and DROMIO of Syracuse*

ANG. 'T is so ; and that self chain about his neck, 10  
 Which he forswore most monstrously to have.

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS ' ACT V

---

Good sir, draw near to me, I 'll speak to him ;  
Signior Antipholus, I wonder much  
That you would put me to this shame and trouble ;  
And, not without some scandal to yourself,  
With circumstance and oaths so to deny  
This chain which now you wear so openly :  
Beside the charge, the shame, imprisonment,  
You have done wrong to this my honest friend ;  
Who, but for staying on our controversy, 90  
Had hoisted sail and put to sea to-day :  
This chain you had of me ; can you deny it ?

ANT. S. I think I had ; I never did deny it.

SEC. MER. Yes, that you did, sir, and forswore it too.

ANT. S. Who heard me to deny it or forswear it ?

SEC. MER. These ears of mine, thou know'st, did  
hear thee.

Fie on thee, wretch ! 't is pity that thou livest  
To walk where any honest men resort.

ANT. S. Thou art a villain to impeach me thus :  
I 'll prove mine honour and mine honesty 30  
Against thee presently, if thou darest stand.

SEC. MER. I dare, and do defy thee for a villain.  
[*They draw.*]

*Enter ADRIANA, LUCIANA, the Courtezan, and others*

ADR. Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake ! he is mad.  
Some get within him, take his sword away :  
Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

---

34 *within him*] at close quarters with him.

## SCENE 1 THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

\* DRO. S. Run, master, run; for God's sake, take a house!

This is some priory. In, or we are spoiled!

[*Exeunt Ant. S. and Dro. S. to the Priory.*]

*Enter the Lady Abbess*

ABB. Be quiet, people. Wherefore throng you hither?

ADR. To fetch my poor distracted husband hence.

Let us come in, that we may bind him fast, 40  
And bear him home for his recovery.

ANG. I knew he was not in his perfect wits.

SEC. MER. I am sorry now that I did draw on him.

ABB. How long hath this possession held the man?

ADR. This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,  
And much different from the man he was;  
But till this afternoon his passion  
Ne'er break into extremity of rage.

ABB. Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of sea?

Buried some dear friend? Hath not else his eye 50  
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love?

A sin prevailing much in youthful men,  
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.  
Which of these sorrows is he subject to?

---

36 *take a house*] enter, as in the phrase "a dog takes the water."

46 *much*] The Second Folio improves the metre by reading *much much*. The reading is worth adoption.

51 *Stray'd his affection*] Caused to stray, led astray; the transitive use of the word is extremely rare, if not unique.

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS Act v

---

ADR. To none of these, except it be the last ;  
Namely, some love that drew him oft from home.

ABB. You should for that have reprehended him.

ADR. Why, so I did.

ABB. Ay, but not rough enough.

ADR. As roughly as my modesty would let me.

ABB. Haply, in private.

ADR. And in assemblies too.

60

ABB. Ay, but not enough.

ADR. It was the copy of our conference :

In bed, he slept not for my urging it ;  
At board, he fed not for my urging it ;  
Alone, it was the subject of my theme ;  
In company I often glanced it ;  
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.

ABB. And thereof came it that the man was mad.

The venom clamours of a jealous woman

Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.

70

It seems his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing :

And thereof comes it that his head is light.

Thou say'st his meat was sauced with thy upbraid-  
ings :

Unquiet meals make ill digestions ;

Thereof the raging fire of fever bred ;

And what's a fever but a fit of madness ?

Thou say'st his sports were hinder'd by thy brawls :

62 copy] repeated theme.

69 venom] The noun is constantly used adjectivally for "venomous."

Cf. *Rich. III*, I, iii, 291 : "His *venom* tooth."

## SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue  
But moody and dull melancholy,  
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair ; 80  
And at her heels a huge infectious troop  
Of pale distemperatures and foes to life ?  
In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest  
To be disturb'd, would mad or man or beast :  
The consequence is, then, thy jealous fits  
Have scared thy husband from the use of wits.

LUC. She never reprehended him but mildly,  
When he demean'd himself rough, rude, and wildly.  
Why bear you these rebukes, and answer not ?

ADR. She did betray me to my own reproof. 90  
Good people, enter, and lay hold on him.

ABB. No, not a creature enters in my house.

ADR. Then let your servants bring my husband  
forth.

ABB. Neither : he took this place for sanctuary,  
And it shall privilege him from your hands  
Till I have brought him to his wits again,  
Or lose my labour in assaying it.

ADR. I will attend my husband, be his nurse,  
Diet his sickness, for it is my office,  
And will have no attorney but myself ; 100  
And therefore let me have him home with me.

79 *moody, etc.*] The line is defective. Suggested interpolations are  
"sadness" or "madness" after "moody," of which the latter is  
the more reasonable. Others insert "moping" after "moody,"  
or substitute "dull-visaged" for "dull."

# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS      ACT V

ABB. Be patient ; for I will not let him stir  
Till I have used the approved means I have,  
With wholesome syrups, drugs and holy prayers,  
To make of him a formal man again :  
It is a branch and parcel of mine oath,  
A charitable duty of my order.  
Therefore depart, and leave him here with me.

ADR. I will not hence, and leave my husband here :  
And ill it doth beseem your holiness 110  
To separate the husband and the wife.

ABB. Be quiet, and depart : thou shalt not have  
him. [Exit.

LUC. Complain unto the Duke of this indignity.

ADR. Come, go : I will fall prostrate at his feet,  
And never rise until my tears and prayers  
Have won his Grace to come in person hither,  
And take perforce my husband from the abbess.

SEC. MER. By this, I think, the dial points at five :  
Anon, I'm sure, the Duke himself in person  
Comes this way to the melancholy vale, 120  
The place of death and sorry execution,  
Behind the ditches of the abbey here.

ANG. Upon what cause ?

SEC. MER. To see a reverend Syracusian merchant,  
Who put unluckily into this bay

105 *formal*] in a normal state of mind, sane. Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, V.  
i, 236 : "Poor *informal* women," i. e. women out of their senses.

121 *death*] The Third Folio's correction of the First and Second Folios'  
reading *depth*.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

Against the laws and statutes of this town,  
Beheaded publicly for his offence.

ANG. See where they come : we will behold his death.

LUC. Kneel to the Duke before he pass the abbey.

*Enter DUKE, attended; ÆGEON bareheaded ; with the Headsman  
and other Officers*

DUKE. Yet once again proclaim it publicly, 130  
If any friend will pay the sum for him,  
He shall not die ; so much we tender him.

ADR. Justice, most sacred Duke, against the abbess !

DUKE. She is a virtuous and a reverend lady :  
It cannot be that she hath done thee wrong.

ADR. May it please your Grace, Antipholus my husband, —

Whom I made lord of me and all I had,  
At your important letters, — this ill day  
A most outrageous fit of madness took him ;  
That desperately he hurried through the street, — 140  
With him his bondman, all as mad as he, —  
Doing displeasure to the citizens  
By rushing in their houses, bearing thence  
Rings, jewels, any thing his rage did like.  
Once did I get him bound, and sent him home,  
Whilst to take order for the wrongs I went,  
That here and there his fury had committed.

146 *take order for*] take measures for settling, or dealing with. Cf.  
*Rich. III.*, IV, ii, 53 : " I will *take order* for her keeping close."



# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS' ACT V

Anon, I wot not by what strong escape,  
 He broke from those that had the guard of him ;  
 And with his mad attendant and himself, 150  
 Each one with ireful passion, with drawn swords,  
 Met us again, and, madly bent on us,  
 Chased us away ; till, raising of more aid,  
 We came again to bind them. Then they fled '  
 Into this abbey, whither we pursued them ;  
 And here the abbess shuts the gates on us,  
 And will not suffer us to fetch him out,  
 Nor send him forth, that we may bear him hence.  
 Therefore, most gracious Duke, with thy command  
 Let him be brought forth, and borne hence for help. 160

DUKE. Long since thy husband served me in my wars ;  
 And I to thee engaged a prince's word,  
 When thou didst make him master of thy bed,  
 To do him all the grace and good I could.  
 Go, some of you, knock at the abbey-gate,  
 And bid the lady abbess come to me.  
 I will determine this before I stir.

*Enter a Servant*

SERV. O mistress, mistress, shift and save yourself !  
 My master and his man are both broke loose,  
 Beaten the maids a-row, and bound the doctor, 170  
 Whose beard thay have singed off with brands of fire ;  
 And ever, as it blazed, they threw on him  
 Great pails of puddled mire to quench the hair :

148 *strong escape*] escape effected by strength.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

My master preaches patience to him, and the while  
His man with scissors nicks him like a fool ;  
And sure, unless you send some present help,  
Between them they will kill the conjurer.

ADR. Peace, fool ! thy master and his man are here ;  
And that is false thou dost report to us.

SERV. Mistress, upon my life, I tell you true ; 180  
I have not breathed almost since I did see it.  
He cries for you, and vows, if he can take you,  
To scorch your face and to disfigure you. [*Cry within.*  
Hark, hark ! I hear him, mistress : fly, be gone !

DUKE. Come, stand by me ; fear nothing. Guard  
with halberds !

ADR. Ay me, it is my husband ! Witness you,  
That he is borne about invisible :  
Even now we housed him in the abbey here ;  
And now he's there, past thought of human reason

*Enter ANTIPHOLUS of Ephesus and DROMIO of Ephesus*

ANT. E. Justice, most gracious Duke, O, grant me  
justice! 190

Even for the service that long since I did thee,  
When I bestrid thee in the wars, and took  
Deep scars to save thy life ; even for the blood  
That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice.

175 *nicks*] clips or crops close. It seems to have been the customary way in which fools' hair was cut.

192 *bestrid*] stood over thee when fallen, protected thee. Cf. 1 *Hen. IV*, V, i, 122: "If thou see me down in the battle, and *bestride* me, so: 'tis a point of friendship."

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS<sup>c</sup> ACT V

---

ÆGE. Unless the fear of death doth make me dote,  
I see my son Antipholus, and Dromio.

ANT. E. Justice, sweet prince, against that woman  
there!

She whom thou gavest to me to be my wife,  
That hath abused and dishonour'd me

Even in the strength and height of injury : 200  
Beyond imagination is the wrong  
That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

DUKE. Discover how, and thou shalt find me just.

ANT. E. This day, great Duke, she shut the doors  
upon me,

While she with harlots feasted in my house.

DUKE. A grievous fault! Say, woman, didst thou so?

ADR. No, my good lord: myself, he and my sister  
To-day did dine together. So befall my soul  
As this is false he burthens me withal!

LUC. Ne'er may I look on day, nor sleep on night, 210  
But she tells to your Highness simple truth!

ANG. O perjured woman! They are both forsworn:  
In this the madman justly chargeth them.

ANT. E. My liege, I am advised what I say;  
Neither disturbed with the effect of wine,  
Nor heady-rash, provoked with raging ire,  
Albeit my wrongs might make one wiser mad.  
This woman lock'd me out this day from dinner:  
That goldsmith there, were he not pack'd with her,  
Could witness it, for he was with me then; 220

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205 *harlots*] a common term of reproach often applied to rascally men  
as well as to wanton women.

# SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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Who parted with me to go fetch a chain,  
 Promising to bring it to the Porpentine,  
 Where Balthazar and I did dine together.  
 Our dinner done, and he not coming thither,  
 I went to seek him: in the street I met him,  
 And in his company that gentleman.  
 There did this perjured goldsmith swear me down  
 That I this day of him received the chain,  
 Which, God he knows, I saw not: for the which  
 He did arrest me with an officer. 230  
 I did obey; and sent my peasant home  
 For certain ducats: he with none return'd.  
 Then fairly I bespoke the officer  
 To go in person with me to my house.  
 By the way we met my wife, her sister, and a rabble more  
 Of vile confederates. Along with them  
 They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain,  
 A mere anatomy, a mountebank,  
 A threadbare juggler, and a fortune-teller,  
 A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch, 240  
 A living dead man: this pernicious slave,  
 Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer;  
 And, gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,  
 And with no face, as 't were, outfacing me,  
 Cries out, I was possess'd. Then all together  
 They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence,  
 And in a dark and dankish vault at home

---

246 *They fell upon me*] The ordinary contemporary method of dealing  
 with lunatics. Cf. the treatment of Malvolio in *Tw. Night*,  
 III, iv.

There left me and my man, both bound together ;  
 Till, gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,  
 I gain'd my freedom, and immediately  
 Ran hither to your Grace ; whom I beseech  
 To give me ample satisfaction  
 For these deep shames and great indignities. 250

ANG. My lord, in truth, thus far I witness with him,  
 That he dined not at home, but was lock'd out.

DUKE. But had he such a chain of thee or no ?

ANG. He had, my lord : and when he ran in here,  
 These people saw the chain about his neck.

SEC. MER. Besides, I will be sworn these ears of mine  
 Heard you confess you had the chain of him, 260  
 After you first forswore it on the mart :  
 And thereupon I drew my sword on you ;  
 And then you fled into this abbey here,  
 From whence, I think, you are come by miracle.

ANT. E. I never came within these abbey-walls ;  
 Nor ever didst thou draw thy sword on me :  
 I never saw the chain, so help me Heaven !  
 And this is false you burthen me withal.

DUKE. Why, what an intricate impeach is this !  
 I think you all have drunk of Circe's cup. 270  
 If here you housed him, here he would have been ;  
 If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly :  
 You say he dined at home ; the goldsmith here  
 Denies that saying. Sirrah, what say you ?

DRO. E. Sir, he dined with her there, at the Por-  
 pentine.

COUR. He did ; and from my finger snatch'd that ring.

SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

ANT. E. 'T is true, my liege ; this ring I had of her.

DUKE. Saw'st thou him enter at the abbey here ?

COUR. As sure, my liege, as I do see your Grace.

DUKE. Why, this is strange. Go call the abbess  
hither. 280

I think you are all mated, or stark mad.

[Exit one to the Abbess.]

ÆGE. Most mighty Duke, vouchsafe me speak a word :  
Haply I see a friend will save my life,  
And pay the sum that may deliver me.

DUKE. Speak freely, Syracusian, what thou wilt.

ÆGE. Is not your name, sir, call'd Antipholus ?  
And is not that your bondman, Dromio ?

DRO. E. Within this hour I was his bondman, sir,  
But he, I thank him, gnaw'd in two my cords :  
Now am I Dromio, and his man unbound. 290

ÆGE. I am sure you both of you remember me.

DRO. E. Ourselves we do remember, sir, by you ;  
For lately we were bound, as you are now.  
You are not Pinch's patient, are you, sir ?

ÆGE. Why look you strange on me ? you know me  
well.

ANT. E. I never saw you in my life till now.

ÆGE. O, grief hath changed me since you saw me last,  
And careful hours with time's deformed hand  
Have written strange defeatures in my face :  
But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice ? 300

281 *mated*] See note on III, ii, 54, *supra*.

298 *careful hours*] hours full of care, anxiety, sorrow.

299 *defeatures*] See note on II, i, 98, *supra*.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS<sup>6</sup> ACT V

---

ANT. E. Neither.

ÆGE. Dromio, nor thou ?

DRO. E. No, trust me, sir, nor I.

ÆGE. I am sure thou dost.

DRO. E. Ay, sir, but I am sure I do not ; and whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to believe him.

ÆGE. Not know my voice ! O time's extremity,  
Hast thou so crack'd and splitted my poor tongue  
In seven short years, that here my only son  
Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares ?  
Though now this grained face of mine be hid 310  
In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,  
And all the conduits of my blood froze up,  
Yet hath my night of life some memory,  
My wasting lamps some fading glimmer left,  
My dull deaf ears a little use to hear :  
All these old witnesses — I cannot err —  
Tell me thou art my son Antipholus.

ANT. E. I never saw my father in my life.

ÆGE. But seven years since, in Syracuse, boy,  
Thou know'st we parted : but perhaps, my son, 320  
Thou shamest to acknowledge me in misery.

ANT. E. The Duke and all that know me in the city  
Can witness with me that it is not so :  
I ne'er saw Syracuse in my life.

DUKE. I tell thee, Syracusian, twenty years  
Have I been patron to Antipholus,

---

309 *my feeble key, etc.*] my weak and discordant tone of voice which is caused by my griefs.

310 *grained*] furrowed like the grain of wood.

## SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

---

During which time he ne'er saw Syracuse :  
I see thy age and dangers make thee dote.

*Re-enter Abbess, with ANTIPHOLUS of Syracuse and DROMIO of Syracuse*

ABB. Most mighty Duke, behold a man much  
wrong'd. *[All gather to see them.]*

ADR. I see two husbands, or mine eyes deceive me. 330

DUKE. One of these men is Genius to the other ;  
And so of these. Which is the natural man,  
And which the spirit ? who deciphers them ?

DRO. S. I, sir, am Dromio : command him away.

DRO. E. I, sir, am Dromio ; pray, let me stay.

ANT. S. Ægeon art thou not ? or else his ghost ?

DRO. S. O, my old master ! who hath bound him  
here ?

ABB. Whoever bound him, I will loose his bonds,  
And gain a husband by his liberty.

Speak, old Ægeon, if thou be'st the man

340

That hadst a wife once call'd Æmilia,

That bore thee at a burthen two fair sons :

O, if thou be'st the same Ægeon, speak,

And speak unto the same Æmilia !

ÆGE. If I dream not, thou art Æmilia :

If thou art she, tell me, where is that son

That floated with thee on the fatal raft ?

ABB. By men of Epidamnum he and I  
And the twin Dromio, all were taken up ;

---

331 *Genius*] guardian angel or spirit.



But by and by rude fishermen of Corinth  
By force took Dromio and my son from them,  
And me they left with those of Epidamnum.  
What then became of them I cannot tell ;  
I to this fortune that you see me in.

350

DUKE. Why, here begins his morning story right :  
'These two Antipholuses, these two so like,  
And these two Dromios, one in semblance, —  
Besides her urging of her wreck at sea, —  
These are the parents to these children,  
Which accidentally are met together.  
Antipholus, thou camest from Corinth first ?

360

ANT. S. No, sir, not I ; I came from Syracuse.

DUKE. Stay, stand apart ; I know not which is  
which.

ANT. E. I came from Corinth, my most gracious  
lord, —

DRO. E. And I with him.

ANT. E. Brought to this town by that most famous  
warrior,

Duke Menaphon, your most renowned uncle.

ADR. Which of you two did dine with me to-day ?

ANT. S. I, gentle mistress.

ADR. And are not you my husband ?

ANT. E. No ; I say nay to that.

370

ANT. S. And so do I ; yet did she call me so :

And this fair gentlewoman, her sister here,

355-360 *Why, here begins, etc.*] This speech of the Duke in the Folio editions is wrongly placed before Ægeon's speech (line 345). Capell made the necessary transposition.

# SCENE I THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

Did call me brother. [*To Luciana*] What I told you then,  
 I hope I shall have leisure to make good ;  
 If this be not a dream I see and hear.

ANG. That is the chain, sir, which you had of me.

ANT. S. I think it be, sir ; I deny it not.

ANT. E. And you, sir, for this chain arrested me.

ANG. I think I did, sir ; I deny it not.

ADR. I sent you money, sir, to be your bail, 380  
 By Dromio ; but I think he brought it not.

DRO. E. No, none by me.

ANT. S. This purse of ducats I received from you,  
 And Dromio my man did bring them me.  
 I see we still did meet each other's man ;  
 And I was ta'en for him, and he for me ;  
 And thereupon these ERRORS are arose.

ANT. E. These ducats pawn I for my father here.

DUKE. It shall not need ; thy father hath his life.

COUR. Sir, I must have that diamond from you. 390

ANT. E. There, take it ; and much thanks for my good  
 cheer.

ABB. Renowned Duke, vouchsafe to take the pains  
 To go with us into the abbey here,  
 And hear at large discoursed all our fortunes :  
 And all that are assembled in this place,  
 That by this sympathized one day's error  
 Have suffer'd wrong, go keep us company,  
 And we shall make full satisfaction.  
 Thirty-three years have I but gone in travail  
 Of you, my sons ; and till this present hour 400  
 My heavy burthen ne'er delivered.

# THE COMEDY OF ERRORS    ACT V

The Duke, my husband, and my children both,  
And you the calendars of their nativity,  
Go to a gossips' feast, and go with me ;  
After so long grief, such nativity !

DUKE. With all my heart, I'll gossip at this feast.

[*Exeunt all but Ant. S., Ant. E., Dro. S., and Dro. E.*]

DRO. S. Master, shall I fetch your stuff from ship-board ?

ANT. E. Dromio, what stuff of mine hast thou embark'd ?

DRO. S. Your goods that lay at host, sir, in the Centaur.

ANT. S. He speaks to me. I am your master, Dromio :

410

Come, go with us ; we'll look to that anon :  
Embrace thy brother there ; rejoice with him.

[*Exeunt Ant. S. and Ant. E.*]

DRO. S. There is a fat friend at your master's house,  
That kitchen'd me for you to-day at dinner :  
She now shall be my sister, not my wife.

DRO. E. Methinks you are my glass, and not my brother :

404, 406 *gossips' feast*] feast given to the sponsors at a christening.

405 *such nativity*] Thus the old reading. Hanmer substituted *felicity* and later editors *festivity*, in the belief that "nativity" was a printer's repetition, through an error of vision, of "nativity," the last word of line 403. But "nativity" harmonises somewhat better with the twice repeated reference to "gossips," i. e. sponsors at a christening.

407-408 *stuff*] See note on IV, iv, 155, *supra*.

409 *lay at host*] were lodged or stored.

SCENE I    THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

I see by you I am a sweet-faced youth.

Will you walk in to see their gossiping?

DRO. S. Not I, sir; you are my elder.

DRO. E. That's a question: how shall we try it? 420

DRO. S. We'll draw cuts for the senior: till then  
lead thou first.

DRO. & E. Nay, then, thus:

We came into the world like brother and brother;  
And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

[*Exeunt.*]



**THE  
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA**









TWO CENTIMES OF VERONA

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OF VERONA BY RICHARD HARRIS

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JULIA. *How happy!*  
PROTEUS. *Look to the bay.*

ACT V, SCENE IV, line 24.

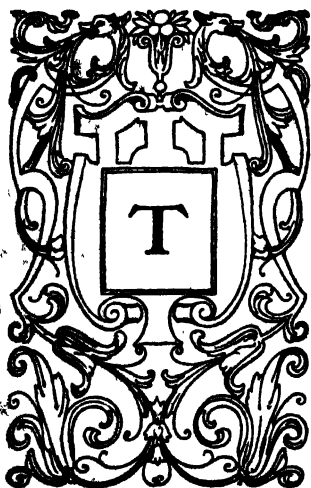
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## INTRODUCTION



THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA" is far from ranking among the greatest or most famous plays of Shakespeare, but it has many points of extreme interest. It is remarkable for its comparative deficiency in Shakespeare's supreme gift, his insight into human nature. It is not that the poet fails in the endeavour to portray character; he simply makes no attempt to penetrate below the surface, and is content to produce such a comedy of mere incident as might have proceeded from a dramatist wedded to classical tradition. This alone, were the fact not certain on other accounts, would prove the play to be a production of his youth. On the other hand, the action, with some trifling exceptions, is linked together with an ease and grace which might have been thought to betoken some previous practice, and certainly appear in advance of "Love's Labour's

## THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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Lost" and "The Comedy of Errors." One charm the play possesses which in the nature of things could not belong to a fruit of the writer's maturity: it breathes the inspiration of eager, thoughtless, irresponsible youth. Except the nearly contemporaneous "Romeo and Juliet," none of Shakespeare's pieces is so entirely youthful in sentiment. And when we consider that this aroma of adolescence must at the time have clung around Shakespeare himself, we may expect the drama to throw a reflex light upon the dramatist at the most truly critical, though not the most brilliant or eventful, period of his life.

These points will demand discussion, but before arriving at them it will be necessary to establish a foundation by determining the date of the play and the source of the plot; neither investigations, fortunately, presenting any serious difficulty.

Not only is "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" unanimously regarded as one of Shakespeare's earliest works, but there are two reasons, slight but not entirely devoid of weight, for considering it as the earliest of any. It is placed first of the comedies in Francis Meres' list (1598); and though Meres could not be expected to name the plays in strict chronological succession, which he may not have known, his order is so nearly that which, quite independently of him, has been established by considerations of external and internal evidence as to render it pretty certain that he did not set them down at random. Again, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is the first play in the Folio in succession to "The Tempest." This latter drama, though in fact the last, or almost the last,

## INTRODUCTION

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of Shakespeare's compositions, was selected by the editors of the First Folio for the post of honour, probably from the feeling that the earliest plays were too slight to form the portal of so great an edifice. It would be only natural that, due concession thus made to the artistic sentiment, the claims of chronology should next find recognition ; and, in fact, the succession of the comedies in the Folio does appear to be roughly chronological. It is, on the other hand, true, as has already been remarked, that "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" exhibits an advance in dramatic construction upon "The Comedy of Errors" and "Love's Labour's Lost," the other very early plays ; but it must be remembered that one of these is a farce adapted from ancient models, and the other a satire, where the evolution of plot is designedly made secondary to the dazzle of dialogue. The question of absolute priority, however, is not material to the play's especial significance and especial claim to indulgence as a youthful work, for there can be little question that it appeared at some time within the period 1589-1592.

The source of the plot is equally certain. It is without doubt expanded from an episode in the second book of Jorge de Montemayor's famous Spanish romance, "*La Diana Enamorada*," where Felismena is represented as disguising herself in man's apparel, entering the service of her false lover as a page, and employed by him to recommend his suit to the new object of his devotion, precisely Julia's relations to Proteus and Silvia. Shakespeare, indeed, has ingeniously and with enhanced dra-



## THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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matic effect complicated the plot, and provided for a fortunate solution by giving the false knight a friend to whom he is as treacherous as to his mistress, but the essence of the situation is in Montemayor. Some editors have doubted the connection between the novel and the play, on the ground that ladies disguised in men's attire are not infrequent figures in dramas and romances. But they have merely taken a general view of the plot, and overlooked the minutiae which demonstrate the connection. If we compare the scene between Julia and her maid in the play with Felismena's account of the same incident in the novel, we cannot doubt that the later author had read his predecessor.

*Julia.* What ho! Lucetta!

*Lucetta.* What would your ladyship?

*Jul.* Is it near dinner time?

*Luc.* I would it were;

That you might kill your stomach on your meat,  
And not upon your maid.

*Jul.* What is 't that you

Took up so gingerly?

*Luc.* Nothing.

*Jul.* Why did'st thou stoop then?

*Luc.* To take up a paper that I let fall.

*Jul.* And is that paper nothing?

*Luc.* Nothing concerning me.

*Jul.* Then let it lie for those that it concerns.

*Luc.* Madam, it will not lie where it concerns

Unless it have a false interpreter.

*Jul.* Some love of yours has writ to you in rhyme.

Let's see your song. (Act I, sc. 2.)

## INTRODUCTION

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**Felismena, recounting her history, says, in Bartholomew Young's translation : —**

“ When with a slower pace than I desired the wished day was come, the discreet and subtle Rosina came into my chamber to help make me ready, in doing whereof she let the letter closely fall, which when I perceived, What is that fell down ? said I, let me see it. It is nothing, Mistress, said she. Come, come, let me see it, said I, what ! move me not, or else tell me what it is. Good Lord, Mistress, said she, why would you see it ? it is the letter I would have given you yesterday. Nay, that it is not, said I, wherefore show it me, that I may see whether you lie or no. I had no sooner said so than she put it into my hands, saying, God never give me good if it be any other thing ; and although I knew it well indeed, yet I said, What ! this is not the same, for I know that well enough, but it is one of thy lover's letters. I will read it to see in what need he standeth of thy favour.”

The incident of the disguised Julia's host innocently inviting her to hear her false lover serenade her rival (Act IV, sc. 2) is also taken from the romance : —

“ Midnight being a little past, mine host called at my chamber door, and told me that if I was desirous to hear some brave music, I should arise quickly and open a window towards the street : the which I did by and by, and, making no noise at all, I heard how Don Felix his page, called Fabius, whom I knew by his voice, said to others that came with him, Now it is time, my masters, because the lady is in her gallery over her garden taking the freshness of the cool night. He had no sooner said so, But they began to wind three cornets and a sackbut, with such skill and sweetness that it seemed celestial music.”

Shakespeare's obligations to the “ Diana Enamorada ” may thus be regarded as established, but a question

## THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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remains as to the channel through which he became acquainted with the romance. If he knew it at first hand he must have understood Spanish, a knowledge which he could hardly have possessed without affording some unequivocal manifestation of it in his works. The English translation by Bartholomew Young was not published until 1598 ; two other translations by Edward Paston and Thomas Wilson, made between 1590 and 1600, were never published. Young, indeed, says that he had kept his translation by him for sixteen years, and it has been conjectured that Shakespeare may have had access to it, a possibility certainly, but no more. A more probable source would be the manuscript of a play entitled "Felix and Philomena," performed before Queen Elizabeth in 1584, the plot of which must, to all appearance, have been derived from Montemayor. If Shakespeare ever saw or read this piece, he can have borrowed nothing from it but the plot, for none of the plays attributed to him is more unequivocally from a single hand or bears more conclusive evidence of his authorship than this. There would be nothing extraordinary in Shakespeare's having seen this play, or in his not having seen it : the supposition that he had, and the hypothesis of his access to Young's manuscript, are alike mere speculations, though not devoid of plausibility. It has, so far as we know, been reserved to us to indicate a more certain channel.

A translation of the first part of Montemayor's romance, the only part of which he was himself the author, and which contains the incident of the disguised Julia

## INTRODUCTION

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[Montemayor's Felismena) officiating as her own lover's page, was printed at Tours in 1592, for Claude de Montreuil and Jean Richer. A copy is in the British Museum. The translator was Nicolas Colin, the namesake, if not a member, of an eminent literary family of the period, but of whom personally we have been able to ascertain no more than that he subsequently translated the "Christian's Memorial," by Luis de Granada. The title-page of the "Diana", declares that this was not the first edition, adding, "*Revise et corrigée outre les précédentes impressions*," and the publishers' preface further sets forth that they have added to Colin's work translations of the two continuations by Alonzo Perez and Gil Polo, translated by George Chappuys, "Vous donnant ainsi, outre ce qu'il y avoit *aux premières impressions*, cette belle addition." Shakespeare, then, had some time, perhaps some years, before the probable date of his play, the opportunity of access to Montemayor's romance in a language which he well understood. He would naturally wish to read so celebrated a work, and a trifling circumstance almost demonstrates that he did. The name of Julia's (Felismena's) maid, which both in the original Spanish and the English translation is *Rosina*, in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" becomes *Lucetta*. Why? Because the French translator had made it *Rosette*.

The origin of that portion of the plot for which Shakespeare is not indebted to Montemayor presents an inquiry of more difficulty, if inquiry be really needed. There seems nothing in it which might not, without extraneous suggestion, have arisen naturally out of the necessity

## THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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under which Shakespeare lay of converting Montemayor's tragedy into a comedy. The relations towards Felismena of Celia, the Spanish counterpart of Silvia, are of another nature than Silvia's to Julia. Silvia, already bound to Valentine, cannot of course fall in love with the supposed youth; but the heart-free Celia, like the Countess in "Twelfth Night," conceives a passion for him; and having, unlike the Countess, no Sebastian to fill his place, carries her unhappy attachment to the length of self-destruction. Don Felix's passion for her being thus quenched in blood, Felismena regains him by delivering him with her bow and shafts from an attack of robbers. These romantic incidents suit the general complexion of Montemayor's fiction, but would be entirely out of place in a comedy, where the dénouement must give general content; where, consequently, even the faithless Proteus must be made happy, and much more the lady who has disdained his suit. Shakespeare was therefore compelled to provide Silvia with a successful lover, and the further contrivance of making this lover the friend of Proteus and a sufferer by his treachery — skilful and thoroughly adequate as it is — grew so naturally out of the situation that it may be doubted whether any external suggestion was required.

The alleged resemblances between "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and other pieces are not, moreover, convincing. The falsehood of a friend, indeed, is the subject of "The Tragedy of Julius and Hyppolita," one of the plays acted in Germany towards the end of the sixteenth century by the English itinerant players who

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at that time frequented that country, and printed in Mr. Albert Cohn's valuable work, "Shakespeare in Germany." Even if Shakespeare himself was not at one time a member of one of these companies, he may well have heard of this play from the actors on their return to England; but the rudeness of the piece is such as to preclude the idea of his having given any serious attention to it. The case is different with another conjectured source, Barnaby Rich's story of "Apollonius and Silla" (1581), of which, had he known it in time, Shakespeare might perhaps have made such use as to transform his drama entirely. The plot is nearly that of "Twelfth Night," and Shakespeare would have been likely to have preferred it to the comparatively artless story of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona." If, indeed, this latter drama immediately succeeded "The Comedy of Errors," he may have thought it wise to refrain from so soon producing another play founded on a bewildering resemblance of personal appearance. In any case, he either did not know Rich's story or abstained from turning it to the account he might have done. Granting that he had read it, it is not any more than "Julius and Hyppolita" a perceptible factor in the dramatic economy of the play, which is conditioned solely by the necessity of giving the episode of the "Diana Enamorada" a happy turn, and complicating the plot sufficiently for theatrical purposes. The problem is most successfully solved; nevertheless in action as in diction, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is one of Shakespeare's simplest and least ambitious productions. It has the charm of the opening bud,

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the herald of the rose, but not yet the rose itself. "For a judgment on the play at large," says that excellent critic the late Mr. Watkiss Lloyd, "we may appeal to Shakespeare himself, whose appreciation is discernible in this remarkable fact, that its scenes, incidents, images, and situations are met with in others of his later plays—always extended, developed, and refined; and we may infer that the poet considered that in this work he had recorded ideas of great poetical worth, but still with a certain crudeness that made him feel no scruple in making other appliance of them." Mr. Lloyd instances the dialogue between Julia and Lucetta where the latter enumerates her mistress's admirers as the germ of the similar scene between Portia and Nerissa in "The Merchant of Venice," and compares Julia's masculine disguise with Rosalind's. In both cases the advance in art and depth of feeling is obvious; but the most evident testimony to the development of Shakespeare's mind is afforded by the comparison of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" with "Twelfth Night," where Julia has flowered into Viola. No two of his plays are more nearly related in apparent contrast; and the relation is not wholly that of the undeveloped to the mature, but also that between two contending schools of dramatic authorship.

In almost all Shakespeare's works character takes the lead of action: not that the action is not commonly most absorbing, and in its conception and conduct an example of supreme art, but that it seems to exist for the sake of the characters, while the characters do not exist for it. The primary purpose of "Macbeth" and "Hamlet," for

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example, is to depict the aspects of human nature revealed in those personages, and the tremendous accompaniments, natural and supernatural, are but adjuncts to this design. In "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," on the other hand, Shakespeare does not greatly concern himself with character painting. He writes such a play as a good Italian dramatist of the age might have written, diversified indeed with strokes of poetry and humour beyond the reach of any contemporary, but which in the main appeals to the reader or spectator not by its character but by its incidents. The special gift in virtue of which he so infinitely transcends all other dramatists is in abeyance: we admire not so much the insight into human nature as the easy grace by which the personages are so nicely discriminated that they can never be confused. Critics have pointed out the delicate antithesis between characters in other respects but faintly individualised by which this object is mainly accomplished. "Proteus, the fickle," says Professor Dowden, "is set against Valentine the faithful: Silvia, the bright and intellectual, against Julia, the ardent and tender; Launce, the humourist, against Speed, the wit." The personages all belong to the accepted types of the classical drama, but all are living men and women, none mere masks as in Plautus and Terence, the models of the contemporary Italian stage.

The obvious reason of the inferiority of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" in the portrayal of character is the youth of the author. Assuming 1590 as the year of its production, Shakespeare would be twenty-six, in gen-



## THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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eral the commencement of a period of great development of genius on its intellectual side ; witness Byron, Shelley, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. A few years later he would have handled the subject differently ; in truth, "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" would have become "Twelfth Night." In everything that he did undertake, nevertheless, his mastery is conspicuous. The play which does not attempt character must appeal to action, and here the young author approves himself already a master. The interest created by the first scene goes on growing to the end. Julia gains upon us continually, and the sympathy thus aroused serves to smooth over the great difficulty inherent in the action, the disposal of Proteus. It is shocking to poetical justice that a double traitor to friend and mistress should make his final exit hand in hand with so charming a creature ; but if the arrangement is essential to the charming creature's happiness, what can be said ? We must fortify ourselves by the reflection that "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is in every respect the comedy of youth. Except the two "heavy fathers" and the sage Panthino, there is not an elderly person among the *dramatis personæ*. The young people have it all their own way, and elope, assume equivocal disguises, carry off other people's daughters, and become captains of robbers on short notice with all the ease and carelessness befitting the April of life. Hence, to the apprehension of the more mature, the incidents and sentiments sometimes assume a tinge of unreality, which they would not have suggested to the youthful author and his youthful *dramatis personæ*. It is significant

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that in 1821 the play was actually converted into an opera ; and, although the suggestion may appear profane, it is the fact that Mr. Gilbert might have tried the same experiment upon "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" with more justification and more success than Dryden in the case of "The Tempest." And this is not on account of any absurdity in the play, but because it is so felicitous an impersonation of the levity of buoyant, unreflecting youth.

The dramatic economy of the piece is as praiseworthy as its power of exciting sympathy. The progress of the action is delightfully easy and natural. One scene brings the next inevitably on ; or if any appear at first parenthetical, they are indispensable as reliefs to the more serious action, and assume their proper relation with it upon a survey of the drama as a whole. If there is any fault, it is that perhaps Julia's romantic resolution to seek her lover in male attire is insufficiently motivated. It would have been easy to justify it by the introduction of some element of jealousy. Rumours might have been supposed to have reached Julia's ears, or she might have been swayed by the insinuations of a gossiping friend, or her extravagant estimate of Proteus' perfection might have suggested to her that her monopoly of such a paragon might be rudely challenged. This might have been expressed in a soliloquy, to avoid the necessity of taking Lucetta entirely into her confidence. We scarcely doubt that at a later period Shakespeare would have devised something of this nature. In the

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play as we have it he seems to avoid highly pitched emotion and complication of whatever kind. His pen must have travelled fleetly and lightly over his paper.\* If this prevents him from manifesting his full power, there is some compensation in the unusual transparency of his language, which would hardly be consistent with a weighty burden of thought or passion.

One most palpable fault is not a defect of construction, but a vice inherent in the action, an instance, unique in Shakespeare, of untruth to Nature—Valentine's momentary resignation of his mistress to Proteus in the fifth act. The incident is absolutely inconceivable; its only apology is that Julia's swoon is essential to the dénouement, and that Shakespeare apparently could not find, nor have any of his critics since found for him, a more effectual way of bringing it to pass. "Cæsar did never wrong, but with just cause." That he was dissatisfied with it may be inferred from the extreme lightness with which it is touched upon; it is no sooner come than it is gone. Here, at all events, we may admire his art. Ere the spectator has had time to take in Valentine's ingratitude to Silvia, or his cool donation of her to another without her consent, he is absorbed in compassion for Julia, around whose helpless form all the *dramatis personæ* are immediately grouped. Silvia herself has no time or opportunity to visit Valentine with the weight of her indignation; and when Julia opens her lips a new situation is unfolded, and the occurrences of the last five minutes belong to ancient history. There can there-

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fore be no foundation for the notion that the scene has been mutilated by the actors, and Shakespeare's avoidance of the expository discourses from leading characters which some have missed stands to the credit of his consummate judgment. It may be added that the incident, impossible and offensive as it is, is quite in harmony with the recklessness and inconsequence of youth which has been noted as a leading element in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," and that Shakespeare and his contemporaries were much more concerned about the effect of their plays upon spectators than with the judgment of readers in the closet, whose very existence they hardly contemplated. Could Shakespeare have foreseen the scrutiny which his works were to receive from the highest intellects, he might sometimes have written better, but he might perhaps not have written at all.

"The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is remarkably exempt from one class of faults incident to the early works of men of genius. It is exceedingly unpretentious. It reveals none of the vague and magnificent aspirations so frequent and natural with gifted youth. The Hamlet in Shakespeare's soul remains unfolded. He announces no startling doctrines, attacks no established institutions, affords no hint of any introspective tendency. Like Goethe, who carried a Werther in him as Shakespeare a Hamlet, he begins his career with a light and lively piece, whose serious episodes are only conjured up to be conjured away. The play, besides, has more practical wisdom than might have been looked for in the work of a young inexperienced writer. It is certainly an overstate-

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ment when Johnson says, "It abounds in *γνώμαι* beyond most of his plays," but it would have been no overstatement to have said that many of its sentences have become aphorisms. The chief intellectual token of juvenility is an occasional tendency to hyperbole and fine writing, as when Valentine says : —

"Bear my lady's train, lest the bare earth  
Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss,  
And of so great a favour growing proud,  
Disdain to root the summer-swelling flower  
And make rude winter everlastingly."

This matches well with Romeo's

"Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return."

But such extravagance is exceptional. As a rule, Shakespeare confines himself closely to the development of his action, and does not seek to adorn it with the flowers of poetry. When, however, a poetical thought springs up under his pen, he does it full justice, and even seems to linger lovingly upon it, as in the exquisite verses : —

"The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou knowest, being stopped, impatiently doth rage;  
But when his fair course is not hindered,  
He makes sweet music with the enamelled stones,  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage,  
And so by many winding nooks he strays  
With willing sport to the wild ocean."

## INTRODUCTION

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The last line must have vibrated in Shakespeare's memory when he wrote in "Henry V":—

"Swilled with the wide and wasteful ocean."

We have spoken of this comedy as essentially the comedy of youth, but it must not be forgotten that it is also a production of the youth of Shakespeare. It shows us in a considerable degree what manner of man he was while passing from adolescence to manhood. It tells us that whatever varieties of company he may have kept, and these were no doubt numerous, he was entirely on a level with the best society, for which it seems to indicate a marked preference. Except the serving folk, all the personages, down to the outlawed robbers, are ladies and gentlemen. Shakespeare evidently feels himself perfectly at ease in this society, which he could not have depicted without intimacy of knowledge. Where could he have obtained this? Certainly not at Stratford; nor entirely, we should think, in London, considering the impediments interposed by his profession. We feel well-nigh convinced that he had looked upon a wider world than England could afford; that the Continent was not unknown to him; that when he makes Valentine say,

"Home-keeping youths have ever homely wits,"

he is repeating a lesson of experience. Whither he is most likely to have wandered is a problem for his biographers; but we feel assured that if he indeed devoted any part of his youth to the lawyer's office, or the schoolmaster's

## THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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desk, such part was little to that spent in contact with the life of courts and camps.

The only contemporary notice of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is its appearance upon Meres' list of Shakespeare's plays, which proves that it was written before 1598. It was printed for the first time in the Folio of 1623; the text is very correct. There is no record of any performance of the play in Shakespeare's time. It was revived in 1762 with alterations, and again in 1784, 1790, and 1808. In 1821 it was converted into an opera by the popular dramatist Frederick Reynolds, under the management of Charles Kemble, and notwithstanding some ludicrous miscarriages with the stage machinery, was performed with considerable success. It was one of Phelps' Shakespearian revivals at Sadler's Wells, but has not been seen since. Generally speaking, its popularity as an acting play seems to have been much below its desert, which may perhaps be accounted for by the difficulty of bringing together four youthful performers qualified to represent the four principal characters.

RICHARD GARNETT.

# **THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA**



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

DUKE OF MILAN, Father to Silvia.

VALENTINE, } the two Gentlemen.  
PROTEUS, }

ANTONIO, Father to Proteus.

THURIO, a foolish rival to Valentine.

EGLAMOUR, Agent for Silvia in her escape.

HOST, where Julia lodges.

OUTLAWS, with Valentine.

SPEED, a clownish Servant to Valentine.

LAUNCE, the like to Proteus.

PANTHINO, Servant to Antonio.

JULIA, beloved of Proteus.

SILVIA, beloved of Valentine.

LUCETTA, waiting-woman to Julia.

Servants, Musicians

SCENE, *Verona ; Milan ; the frontiers of Mantua*

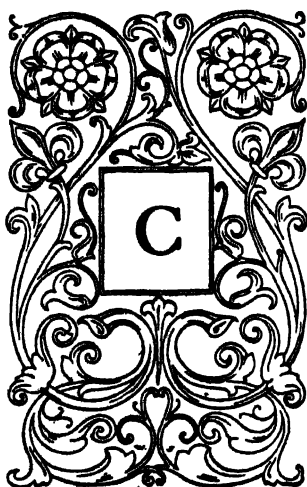
<sup>1</sup> The First Folio of 1623, where this play was printed for the first time, gave at the end of the piece "The names of all the actors." Later editors have adopted that list with very slight alteration. The old text is divided into both Acts and Scenes. No indication is given of the "Scene" of the action.



ACT FIRST—SCENE I—VERONA  
AN OPEN PLACE

*Enter VALENTINE and PROTEUS*

VALENTINE



EASE TO PERSUADE, MY  
loving Proteus :  
Home-keeping youth have ever  
homely wits.  
Were't not affection chains thy  
tender days  
To the sweet glances of thy  
honour'd love,  
I rather would entreat thy com-  
pany  
To see the wonders of the world  
abroad,  
Than, living dully sluggardized  
at home,

Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.  
But since thou lovest, love still, and thrive therein,  
Even as I would, when I to love begin.

PRO. Wilt thou be gone ? Sweet Valentine, adieu !

10

8 *shapeless*] purposeless.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT I

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Think on thy Proteus, when thou haply seest  
 Some rare note-worthy object in thy travel :  
 Wish me partaker in thy happiness,  
 When thou dost meet good hap ; and in thy danger,  
 If ever danger do environ thee,  
 Commend thy grievance to my holy prayers,  
 For I will be thy beadsman, Valentine.

VAL. And on a love-book pray for my success ?

PRO. Upon some book I love I'll pray for thee. 26

VAL. That's on some shallow story of deep love :  
 How young Leander cross'd the Hellespont.

PRO. That's a deep story of a deeper love ;  
 For he was more than over shoes in love.

VAL. 'Tis true ; for you are over boots in love,  
 And yet you never swum the Hellespont.

PRO. Over the boots ? nay, give me not the boots.

VAL. No, I will not, for it boots thee not.

PRO. What ?

22 *Leander . . . Hellespont*] Reference is again made to the story of Leander, in III, i, 119–120, *infra*. The legend was often treated in Renaissance literature ; but Shakespeare probably knew it best in Marlowe's verse translation of a portion of the Greek poem on the subject by Musæus. Marlowe's unfinished work was entered on the Stationers' Register 18 September, 1593, but had probably already circulated in manuscript ; it was not published till 1598. Marlowe's translation of Musæus's "Hero and Leander" was completed by Chapman, and the whole was published in 1600.

27 *give me not the boots*] A proverbial phrase : "do not make a laughing stock of me." Cf. Cotgrave *Fr.-Eng. Dict.*, 1611: "Bailler foin en corne: to give one the boots." The text jestingly suggests that the phrase embodied an allusion to the infliction of torture by the instrument commonly called "the boots."

## SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

VAL. To be in love, where scorn is bought with  
groans;  
Coy looks with heart-sore sighs; one fading moment's  
mirth

30

With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights :  
If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain ;  
If lost, why then a grievous labour won ;  
However, but a folly bought with wit,  
Or else a wit by folly vanquished.

PRO. So, by your circumstance, you call me fool.

VAL. So, by your circumstance, I fear you'll prove.

PRO. 'T is love you cavil at: I am not Love.

VAL. Love is your master, for he masters you :  
And he that is so yoked by a fool,  
Methinks, should not be chronicled for wise.

40

PRO. Yet writers say, as in the sweetest bud  
The eating canker dwells, so eating love  
Inhabits in the finest wits of all.

VAL. And writers say, as the most forward bud  
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,  
Even so by love the young and tender wit  
Is turn'd to folly; blasting in the bud,  
Losing his verdure even in the prime,  
And all the fair effects of future hopes.  
But wherefore waste I time to counsel thee,  
That art a votary to fond desire ?  
Once more adieu ! my father at the road  
Expects my coming, there to see me shipp'd.

50

42-44] Cf. *Sonnet lxx*: "For canker vice the *sweetest* buds doth love."

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT I

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PRO. And thither will I bring thee, Valentine.

VAL. Sweet Proteus, no ; now let us take our leave.  
To Milan let me hear from thee by letters  
Of thy success in love, and what news else  
Betideth here in absence of thy friend ;  
And I likewise will visit thee with mine.

60

PRO. All happiness bechance to thee in Milan !

VAL. As much to you at home ! and so, farewell. [*Exit.*]

PRO. He after honour hunts, I after love :  
He leaves his friends to dignify them more ;  
I leave myself, my friends, and all, for love.  
Thou, Julia, thou hast metamorphosed me,  
Made me neglect my studies, lose my time,  
War with good counsel, set the world at nought ;  
Made wit with musing weak, heart sick with thought.

*Enter SPEED*

SPEED. Sir Proteus, save you ! Saw you my master ? 70

PRO. But now he parted hence, to embark for Milan.

SPEED. Twenty to one, then, he is shipp'd already,  
And I have play'd the sheep in losing him.

PRO. Indeed, a sheep doth very often stray,  
An if the shepherd be awhile away.

---

71 *Milan*] Both Verona and Milan were inland towns, and Verona alone is on a navigable river, Adige. Shakespeare's knowledge of the geography of Northern Italy seems to be at fault in representing the journey between the two places as being made by ship. Milan lies some ninety miles due east of Verona in the most northerly latitude of Italy.

73 *sheep*] "Sheep" was pronounced "ship" in Elizabethan English. See *L. L. L.*, II, i, 218.

SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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SPEED. You conclude that my master is a shepherd, then, and I a sheep?

PRO. I do.

SPEED. Why, then, my horns are his horns, whether I wake or sleep.

PRO. A silly answer, and fitting well a sheep.

SPEED. This proves me still a sheep.

94

PRO. True; and thy master a shepherd.

SPEED. Nay, that I can deny by a circumstance.

PRO. It shall go hard but I'll prove it by another.

SPEED. The shepherd seeks the sheep, and not the sheep the shepherd; but I seek my master, and my master seeks not me: therefore I am no sheep.

PRO. The sheep for fodder follow the shepherd; the shepherd for food follows not the sheep: thou for wages followest thy master; thy master for wages follows not thee: therefore thou art a sheep.

95

SPEED. Such another proof will make me cry "baa."

PRO. But, dost thou hear? gavest thou my letter to Julia?

SPEED. Ay, sir: I, a lost mutton, gave your letter to her, a laced mutton, and she, a laced mutton, gave me, a lost mutton, nothing for my labour.

PRO. Here's too small a pasture for such store of muttons.

SPEED. If the ground be overcharged, you were best stick her.

99

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94 *lost mutton . . . laced mutton*] Speed admits himself to be a sheep whose master is lost. "Laced mutton" is a common name for a courtesan wearing a tightly-laced bodice.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT I

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PRO. Nay: in that you are astray, 't were best pound you.

SPEED. Nay, sir, less than a pound shall serve me for carrying your letter.

PRO. You mistake; I mean the pound, — a pinfold.

SPEED. From a pound to a pin? fold it over and over, 'T is threefold too little for carrying a letter to your lover.

PRO. But what said she?

SPEED. [*First nodding*] Ay.

PRO. Nod — Ay — why, that's noddy.

SPEED. You mistook, sir; I say, she did nod: and you ask me if she did nod; and I say, "Ay." 110

PRO. And that set together is noddy.

SPEED. Now you have taken the pains to set it together, take it for your pains.

PRO. No, no; you shall have it for bearing the letter.

SPEED. Well, I perceive I must be fain to bear with you.

PRO. Why, sir, how do you bear with me?

SPEED. Marry, sir, the letter, very orderly; having nothing but the word "noddy" for my pains.

PRO. Beshrew me, but you have a quick wit.

SPEED. And yet it cannot overtake your slow purse. 120

PRO. Come, come, open the matter in brief: what said she?

SPEED. Open your purse, that the money and the matter may be both at once delivered.

PRO. Well, sir, here is for your pains. What said she?

SPEED. Truly, sir, I think you'll hardly win her.

PRO. Why, couldst thou perceive so much from her?

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

SPEED. Sir, I could perceive nothing at all from her ; no, not so much as a ducat for delivering your letter : and being so hard to me that brought your mind, I fear she 'll prove as hard to you in telling your mind. Give her no token but stones ; for she 's as hard as steel. 139

PRO. What said she ? nothing ?

SPEED. No, not so much as "Take this for thy pains." To testify your bounty, I thank you, you have testerned me ; in requital whereof, henceforth carry your letters yourself : and so, sir, I 'll commend you to my master.

PRO. Go, go, be gone, to save your ship from wreck,  
Which cannot perish having thee aboard,  
Being destined to a drier death on shore. [*Exit Speed.* 140  
I must go send some better messenger :  
I fear my Julia would not deign my lines,  
Receiving them from such a worthless post. [*Exit.*

### SCENE II — THE SAME

#### GARDEN OF JULIA'S HOUSE

*Enter JULIA and LUCETTA*

JUL. But say, Lucetta, now we are alone,  
Wouldst thou, then, counsel me to fall in love ?

140 *a drier death*] A variant of the proverbial expression "He who is born to be hanged will not be drowned." Cf. *Tempest*, I, i, 77-78.

142 *deign*] *sc.* to receive.

Sc. II] This scene reads like a crude and feeble draft of the effective duologue between Portia and Nerissa : *Merch. of Ven.*, I, ii.



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT I

LUC. Ay, madam ; so you stumble not unheedfully.

JUL. Of all the fair resort of gentlemen  
That every day with parle encounter me,  
In thy opinion which is worthiest love ?

LUC. Please you repeat their names, I'll show my mind  
According to my shallow simple skill.

JUL. What think'st thou of the fair Sir Eglamour ?

LUC. As of a knight well-spoken, neat and fine ; 10  
But, were I you, he never should be mine.

JUL. What think'st thou of the rich Mercatio ?

LUC. Well of his wealth ; but of himself, so so.

JUL. What think'st thou of the gentle Proteus ?

LUC. Lord, Lord ! to see what folly reigns in us !

JUL. How now ! what means this passion at his name ?

LUC. Pardon, dear madam : 't is a passing shame  
That I, unworthy body as I am,  
Should censure thus on lovely gentlemen.

JUL. Why not on Proteus, as of all the rest ? 20

LUC. Then thus, — of many good I think him best.

JUL. Your reason ?

LUC. I have no other but a woman's reason ;  
I think him so, because I think him so.

JUL. And wouldst thou have me cast my love on him ?

LUC. Ay, if you thought your love not cast away.

JUL. Why, he, of all the rest, hath never moved me.

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9 *Sir Eglamour*] Often used for a characterless inamorato. There is no reference here to Sir Eglamour the friend and agent of Silvia. See Act IV, Sc. iii, *seq.*

27 *moved me*] solicited, approached me. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, III, iv, 2, "we have had no time to move our daughter."

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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LUC. Yet he, of all the rest, I think, best loves ye.

JUL. His little speaking shows his love but small.

LUC. Fire that's closest kept burns most of all. 30

JUL. They do not love that do not show their love.

LUC. O, they love least that let men know their love.

JUL. I would I knew his mind.

LUC. Peruse this paper, madam.

JUL. "To Julia." — Say, from whom?

LUC. That the contents will show.

JUL. Say, say, who gave it thee?

LUC. Sir Valentine's page; and sent, I think, from  
Proteus.

He would have given it you; but I, being in the  
way,

Did in your name receive it: pardon the fault, I pray. 40

JUL. Now, by my modesty, a goodly broker!

Dare you presume to harbour wanton lines?

To whisper and conspire against my youth?

Now, trust me, 't is an office of great worth,

And you an officer fit for the place.

There, take the paper: see it be return'd;

Or else return no more into my sight.

LUC. To plead for love deserves more fee than hate.

JUL. Will ye be gone?

LUC. That you may ruminate. [*Exit.*]

JUL. And yet I would I had o'erlook'd the letter: 50

It were a shame to call her back again,

And pray her to a fault for which I chid her.

What fool is she, that knows I am a maid,

And would not force the letter to my view!

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT I

---

Since maids, in modesty, say "no" to that  
Which they would have the profferer construe "ay."  
Fie, fie, how wayward is this foolish love,  
That, like a testy babe, will scratch the nurse,  
And presently, all humbled, kiss the rod !  
How churlishly I chid Lucetta hence, 60  
When willingly I would have had her here !  
How angrily I taught my brow to frown,  
When inward joy enforced my heart to smile !  
My penance is, to call Lucetta back,  
And ask remission for my folly past.  
What, ho ! Lucetta !

*Re-enter LUCETTA*

LUC. What would your ladyship ?

JUL. Is't near dinner-time ?

LUC. I would it were ;  
That you might kill your stomach on your meat,  
And not upon your maid.

JUL. What is't that you took up so gingerly ? 70

LUC. Nothing.

JUL. Why didst thou stoop, then ?

LUC. To take a paper up that I let fall.

JUL. And is that paper nothing ?

LUC. Nothing concerning me.

JUL. Then let it lie for those that it concerns.

LUC. Madam, it will not lie where it concerns,  
Unless it have a false interpreter.

JUL. Some love of yours hath writ to you in rhyme.

LUC. That I might sing it, madam, to a tune. 80

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

Give me a note: your ladyship can set.

JUL. As little by such toys as may be possible.

Best sing it to the tune of "Light o' love."

LUC. It is too heavy for so light a tune.

JUL. Heavy! belike it hath some burden, then?

LUC. Ay; and melodious were it, would you sing it.

JUL. And why not you?

LUC. I cannot reach so high.

JUL. Let's see your song. How now, minion!

LUC. Keep tune there still, so you will sing it out:  
And yet methinks I do not like this tune.

90

JUL. You do not?

LUC. No, madam; it is too sharp.

JUL. You, minion, are too saucy.

LUC. Nay, now you are too flat,  
And mar the concord with too harsh a descant:  
There wanteth but a mean to fill your song.

JUL. The mean is drown'd with your unruly bass.

LUC. Indeed, I bid the base for Proteus.

JUL. This babble shall not henceforth trouble me.

Here is a coil with protestation! [Tears the letter.

Go get you gone, and let the papers lie:

100

81-82 *set . . . by such toys*] A quibble on *set*, i. e., "set to music,"  
"compose," and *set by* (*a thing*), i. e., "make account of (*a thing*)."

83 "*Light o' love*"] A popular air again mentioned in *Much Ado*, III,  
iv, 38.

97 *bid the base*] The quibble, which has hitherto played with musical  
terms, here alludes to the boys' game of "prisoner's base" in  
which the players *bid or challenge one another to exchange bases* by  
running without being caught. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 303: "To  
*bid the wind a base.*"

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT I

You would be fingering them, to anger me.

LUC. She makes it strange; but she would be best pleased

To be so anger'd with another letter. [Exit.

JUL. Nay, would I were so anger'd with the same!

O hateful hands, to tear such loving words!

Injurious wasps, to feed on such sweet honey,

And kill the bees, that yield it, with your stings!

I'll kiss each several paper for amends.

Look, here is writ "kind Julia." Unkind Julia!

As in revenge of thy ingratitude,

110

I throw thy name against the bruising stones,

Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain.

And here is writ "love-wounded Proteus."

Poor wounded name! my bosom, as a bed,

Shall lodge thee, till thy wound be thoroughly heal'd;

And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss.

But twice or thrice was "Proteus" written down.

Be calm, good wind, blow not a word away,

Till I have found each letter in the letter,

Except mine own name: that some whirlwind bear

120

Unto a ragged, fearful-hanging rock,

And throw it thence into the raging sea!

Lo, here in one line is his name twice writ,

"Poor forlorn Proteus, passionate Proteus,

To the sweet Julia": — that I'll tear away. —

And yet I will not, sith so prettily

He couples it to his complaining names.

Thus will I fold them one upon another:

Now kiss, embrace, contend, do what you will.

## SCENE III TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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*Re-enter LUCETTA*

LUC. Madam,  
Dinner is ready, and your father stays.

130

JUL. Well, let us go.

LUC. What, shall these papers lie like tell-tales here?

JUL. If you respect them, best to take them up:

LUC. Nay, I was taken up for laying them down:  
Yet here they shall not lie, for catching cold.

JUL. I see you have a month's mind to them.

LUC. Ay, madam, you may say what sights you see;  
I see things too, although you judge I wink.

JUL. Come, come; will 't please you go? [*Exeunt.* 140]

### SCENE III — THE SAME

#### *ANTONIO'S HOUSE*

*Enter ANTONIO and PANTHINO*

ANT. Tell me, Panthino, what sad talk was that  
Wherewith my brother held you in the cloister?

PAN. 'T was of his nephew Proteus, your son.

ANT. Why, what of him?

PAN. He wonder'd that your lordship  
Would suffer him to spend his youth at home,  
While other men, of slender reputation,  
Put forth their sons to seek preferment out:  
Some to the wars, to try their fortune there;  
Some to discover islands far away;  
Some to the studious universities.

10

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT I

---

For any, or for all *these exercises*,  
He said that Proteus your son was meet ;  
And did request me to importune you  
To let him spend his time no more at home,  
Which would be great impeachment to his age,  
In having known no travel in his youth.

ANT. Nor need'st thou much importune me to  
that

Whereon this month I have been hammering.  
I have consider'd well his loss of time,  
And how he cannot be a perfect man,  
Not being tried and tutor'd in the world :  
Experience is by industry achieved,  
And perfected by the swift course of time.  
Then, tell me, whither were I best to send him ?

20

PAN. I think your lordship is not ignorant  
How his companion, youthful Valentine,  
Attends the emperor in his royal court.

ANT. I know it well.

PAN. 'T were good, I think, your lordship sent him  
thither :

There shall he practise tilts and tournaments,  
Hear sweet discourse, converse with noblemen,  
And be in eye of every exercise  
Worthy his youth and nobleness of birth.

30

---

27 *emperor*] The German Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire frequently held their court in Milan, where they were crowned with the iron crown of Lombardy. The Duke of Milan was a vassal of the Emperor.

32 *be in eye of*] be in sight of, observe.

### SCENE III TWO GENTLEMEN

ANT. I like thy counsel ; well hast thou advised :  
And that thou mayst perceive how well I like it  
The execution of it shall make known.  
Even with the speediest expedition  
I will dispatch him to the emperor's court.

PAN. To-morrow, may it please you, Don Alphonso,  
With other gentlemen of good esteem, 40  
Are journeying to salute the emperor,  
And to commend their service to his will.

ANT. Good company ; with them shall Proteus  
go :  
And, in good time ! now will we break with him.

*Enter PROTEUS*

PRO. Sweet love ! sweet lines ! sweet life !  
Here is her hand, the agent of her heart ;  
Here is her oath for love, her honour's pawn.  
O, that our fathers would applaud our loves,  
To seal our happiness with their consents !  
O heavenly Julia ! 50

ANT. How now ! what letter are you reading  
there ?

PRO. May't please your lordship, 'tis a word or  
two  
Of commendations sent from Valentine,  
Deliver'd by a friend that came from him.

ANT. Lend me the letter ; let me see what news.

PRO. There is no news, my lord ; but that he  
writes  
How happily he lives, how well beloved,



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT I

---

And daily graced by the emperor ;  
 Wishing me with him, partner of his fortune.

ANT. And how stand you affected to his wish ? 60

PRO. As one relying on your lordship's will,  
 And not depending on his friendly wish.

ANT. My will is something sorted with his wish.  
 Muse not that I thus suddenly proceed ;  
 For what I will, I will, and there an end.  
 I am resolved that thou shalt spend some time  
 With Valentinus in the emperor's court :  
 What maintenance he from his friends receives,  
 Like exhibition thou shalt have from me.

To-morrow be in readiness to go : 70  
 Excuse it not, for I am peremptory.

PRO. My lord, I cannot be so soon provided :  
 Please you, deliberate a day or two.

ANT. Look, what thou want'st shall be sent after thee :  
 No more of stay ! to-morrow thou must go.  
 Come on, Panthino : you shall be employ'd  
 To hasten on his expedition. [*Exeunt Ant. and Pan.*]

PRO. Thus have I shunn'd the fire for fear of burning,  
 And drench'd me in the sea, where I am drown'd.  
 I fear'd to show my father Julia's letter, 80  
 Lest he should take exceptions to my love ;  
 And with the vantage of mine own excuse  
 Hath he excepted most against my love.

---

63 *will* . . . *wish*] In this contrasted use of "will," "wish," which reappears IV, ii, 88-89 *infra*, *will* signifies obstinate resolution, and *wish* inclination. *Wish* is in effect the diminutive of *will*.

### SCENE III TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

O, how this spring of love resembleth  
The uncertain glory of an April day,  
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,  
And by and by a cloud takes all away !

*Re-enter PANTHINO*

PAN. Sir Proteus, your father calls for you :

He is in haste ; therefore, I pray you, go.

PRO. Why, this it is : my heart accords thereto, 90

And yet a thousand times it answers "no." [*Exeunt.*]

---

84-87] *Sonnet xxxiii* works up this image with gorgeous effect.



ACT SECOND — SCENE I — MILAN

THE DUKE'S PALACE

*Enter VALENTINE and SPEED*

SPEED

IR, YOUR GLOVE.

VAL. Not mine; my gloves  
are on.

SPEED. Why, then, this may  
be yours, for this is but one.

VAL. Ha! let me see: ay, give  
it me, it's mine:

Sweet ornament that decks a  
thing divine!

Ah, Silvia, Silvia!

SPEED. Madam Silvia! Madam  
Silvia!

VAL. How now, sirrah?

SPEED. She is not within hearing, sir.

VAL. Why, sir, who bade you call her?

SPEED. Your worship, sir; or else I mistook.

VAL. Well, you'll still be too forward.

2 *but one*] The quibble is on the common Elizabethan pronunciation of  
"one" as "on." Cf. *L. L. L.*, IV, ii, 80.

SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

**SPEED.** And yet I was last chidden for being too slow.

**VAL.** Go to, sir: tell me, do you know Madam Silvia?

**SPEED.** She that your worship loves?

**VAL.** Why, how know you that I am in love?

**SPEED.** Marry, by these special marks: first, you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms, like a male-content; to relish a love-song, like a robin-redbreast; to walk alone, like one that had the pestilence; to sigh, like a school-boy that had lost his A B C; to weep, like a young wench that had buried her grandam; to fast, like one that takes diet; to watch, like one that fears robbing; to speak puling, like a beggar at Hallowmas. You were wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walked, to walk like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you looked sadly, it was for want of money: and now you are metamorphosed with a mistress, that, when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master.

**VAL.** Are all these things perceived in me?

**SPEED.** They are all perceived without ye.

30

**VAL.** Without me? they cannot.

**SPEED.** Without you? nay, that's certain, for, without you were so simple, none else would: but you are so without these follies, that these follies are within you, and shine through you like the water in an urinal,

22 *takes diet*] follows a curative regimen.

23 *Hallowmas*] All Saints' Day, November 1, when beggars were wont to pursue their vocation with conspicuous energy.

25 *the lions*] i. e., the lions kept in the Tower of London.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

that not an eye that sees you but is a physician to comment on your malady.

VAL. But tell me, dost thou know my lady Silvius?

SPEED. She that you gaze on so as she sits at supper?

VAL. Hast thou observed that? even she, I mean.

SPEED. Why, sir, I know her not.

40

VAL. Dost thou know her by my gazing on her, and yet knowest her not?

SPEED. Is she not hard-favoured, sir?

VAL. Not so fair, boy, as well-favoured.

SPEED. Sir, I know that well enough.

VAL. What dost thou know?

SPEED. That she is not so fair as, of you, well-favoured.

VAL. I mean that her beauty is exquisite, but her favour infinite.

SPEED. That's because the one is painted, and the other out of all count.

VAL. How painted? and how out of count?

SPEED. Marry, sir, so painted, to make her fair, that no man counts of her beauty.

VAL. How esteemest thou me? I account of her beauty.

SPEED. You never saw her since she was deformed.

VAL. How long hath she been deformed?

SPEED. Ever since you loved her.

VAL. I have loved her ever since I saw her; and still I see her beautiful.

60

SPEED. If you love her, you cannot see her.

• SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

VAL. Why?

SPEED. Because Love is blind. O, that you had mine eyes; or your own eyes had the lights they were wont to have when you chid at Sir Proteus for going ungartered!

VAL. What should I see then?

SPEED. Your own present folly, and her passing deformity: for he, being in love, could not see to garter his hose; and you, being in love, cannot see to put on your hose.

VAL. Belike, boy, then, you are in love; for last morning you could not see to wipe my shoes.

SPEED. True, sir; I was in love with my bed: I thank you, you swung me for my love, which makes me the bolder to chide you for yours.

VAL. In conclusion, I stand affected to her.

SPEED. I would you were set, so your affection would cease.

VAL. Last night she enjoined me to write some lines to one she loves.

SPEED. And have you?

80

VAL. I have.

SPEED. Are they not lamely writ?

VAL. No, boy, but as well as I can do for them.  
• Peace! here she comes.

SPEED. [*Aside*] O excellent motion! O exceeding puppet! Now will he interpret to her.

85 *motion*] puppet-show, of which the showman was often called the *interpreter* (cf. l. 86).

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

*Enter SILVIA*

VAL. Madam and mistress, a thousand good-morrows.

SPEED. [*Aside*] O, give ye good even! here's a million of manners.

SIL. Sir Valentine and servant, to you two thousand. 90

SPEED. [*Aside*] He should give her interest, and she gives it him.

VAL. As you enjoin'd me, I have writ your letter  
Unto the secret nameless friend of yours ;  
Which I was much unwilling to proceed in,  
But for my duty to your ladyship.

SIL. I thank you, gentle servant: 't is very clerkly done.

VAL. Now trust me, madam, it came hardly off ;  
For, being ignorant to whom it goes,  
I writ at random, very doubtfully. 100

SIL. Perchance you think too much of so much pains ?

VAL. No, madam ; so it stead you, I will write,  
Please you command, a thousand times as much ;  
And yet —

SIL. A pretty period ! Well, I guess the sequel ;  
And yet I will not name it ; — and yet I care not ; —  
And yet take this again : — and yet I thank you ;  
Meaning henceforth to trouble you no more.

SPEED. [*Aside*] And yet you will ; and yet another  
“ yet.”

VAL. What means your ladyship ? do you not like it ?

SIL. Yes, yes : the lines are very quaintly writ ; 111

---

97 *servant*] often used for a lover ; a rendering of the Italian *cavaliere servente*.

## SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

But since unwillingly, take them again.

Nay, take them.

VAL. Madam, they are for you.

SIL. Ay, ay : you writ them, sir, at my request ;  
But I will none of them ; they are for you ;  
I would have had them writ more movingly.

VAL. Please you, I 'll write your ladyship another.

SIL. And when it's writ, for my sake read it over,  
And if it please you, so ; if not, why, so.

190

VAL. If it please me, madam, what then ?

SIL. Why, if it please you, take it for your labour :  
And so, good morrow, servant. *[Exit.]*

SPEED. O jest unseen, inscrutable, invisible,  
As a nose on a man's face, or a weathercock on a steeple !  
My master sues to her ; and she hath taught her  
suitor,

He being her pupil, to become her tutor.

O excellent device ! was there ever heard a better,  
That my master, being scribe, to himself should write  
the letter ?

VAL. How now, sir ? what are you reasoning with  
yourself ?

131

SPEED. Nay, I was rhyming : 't is you that have the  
reason.

VAL. To do what ?

SPEED. To be a spokesman from Madam Silvia.

VAL. To whom ?

SPEED. To yourself : why, she wooes you by a figure.

VAL. What figure ?

SPEED. By a letter, I should say.



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

VAL. Why, she hath not writ to me?

149

SPEED. What need she, when she hath made you write to yourself? Why, do you not perceive the jest?

VAL. No, believe me.

SPEED. No believing you, indeed, sir. But did you perceive her earnest?

VAL. She gave me none, except an angry word.

SPEED. Why, she hath given you a letter.

VAL. That's the letter I writ to her friend.

SPEED. And that letter hath she delivered, and there an end.

150

VAL. I would it were no worse.

SPEED. I'll warrant you, 't is as well:

For often have you writ to her; and she, in modesty,  
Or else for want of idle time, could not again reply;  
Or fearing else some messenger, that might her mind  
discover,  
Herself hath taught her love himself to write unto her  
lover.

All this I speak in print, for in print I found it. Why  
muse you, sir? 't is dinner-time.

VAL. I have dined.

159

SPEED. Ay, but hearken, sir; though the chameleon  
Love can feed on the air, I am one that am nourished  
by my victuals, and would fain have meat. O, be not  
like your mistress; be moved, be moved. [*Exeunt.*]

157 *in print*] The four preceding lines are doubtless a quotation, though the source has not been traced. There is a quibble on the colloquial use of "in print" in the sense of "with exactness, precision."

163 *be moved*] have compassion.

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

### SCENE II — VERONA

#### JULIA'S HOUSE

*Enter* PROTEUS *and* JULIA

PRO. Have patience, gentle Julia.

JUL. I must, where is no remedy.

PRO. When possibly I can, I will return.

JUL. If you turn not, you will return the sooner.  
Keep this remembrance for thy Julia's sake.

[*Giving a ring.*

PRO. Why, then, we'll make exchange; here, take  
you this.

JUL. And seal the bargain with a holy kiss.

PRO. Here is my hand for my true constancy;  
And when that hour o'erslips me in the day  
Wherein I sigh not, Julia, for thy sake,  
The next ensuing hour some foul mischance  
Torment me for my love's forgetfulness!  
My father stays my coming; answer not;  
The tide is now: — nay, not thy tide of tears;  
That tide will stay me longer than I should.  
Julia, farewell!

[*Exit Julia.*

What, gone without a word?

Ay, so true love should do: it cannot speak;  
For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it.

7 *holy kiss*] one of the formal observances of a betrothal. Cf. *Tw.*  
*Night*, V, i, 152. The *holy close of lips*.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

---

*Enter PANTINO*

PAN. Sir Proteus, you are stay'd for.

PRO. Go ; I come, I come.

Alas ! this parting strikes poor lovers dumb. *[Exit.*

### SCENE III—THE SAME

#### A STREET

*Enter LAUNCE leading a dog*

LAUNCE. Nay, 't will be this hour ere I have done weeping ; all the kind of the Launces have this very fault. I have received my proportion, like the prodigious son, and am going with Sir Proteus to the Imperial's court. I think Crab, my dog, be the sourest-natured dog that lives : my mother weeping, my father wailing, my sister crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our house in a great perplexity, yet did not this cruel-hearted cur shed one tear : he is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog : a Jew would have wept 10 to have seen our parting ; why, my grandam, having no eyes, look you, wept herself blind at my parting. Nay, I 'll show you the manner of it. This shoe is my father : no, this left shoe is my father : no, no, this left shoe is my mother : nay, that cannot be so neither : yes, it is so, it is so, it hath the worser sole. This shoe, with

2 kind] stock, family.

### SCENE III TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

the hole in it, is my mother, and this my father; a vengeance on't! there 'tis: now, sir, this staff is my sister, for, look you, she is as white as a lily, and as small as a wand: this hat is Nan, our maid: I am the dog: no, the dog is himself, and I am the dog, — Oh! the dog is me, and I am myself; ay, so, so. Now come I to my father; Father, your blessing: now should not the shoe speak a word for weeping: now should I kiss my father; well, he weeps on. Now come I to my mother: Oh, that she could speak now like a wood woman! Well, I kiss her, why, there 'tis; here's my mother's breath up and down. Now come I to my sister; mark the moan she makes. Now the dog all this while sheds not a tear, nor speaks a word; but see how I lay the dust with my tears.

*Enter PANTHINO*

PAN. Launce, away, away, aboard! thy master is shipped, and thou art to post after with oars. What's the matter? why weepest thou, man? Away, ass! you'll lose the tide, if you tarry any longer.

LAUNCE. It is no matter if the tied were lost; for it is the unkindest tied that ever any man tied.

PAN. What's the unkindest tide?

LAUNCE. Why, he that's tied here, Crab, my dog.

25 *wood woman*] mad, crazy woman; Theobald's emendation of the Folio reading *would-woman*.

26 *up and down*] all over.

34 *tied*] The quibble on *tide* and *tied* is of common occurrence in Elizabethan writers. Cf. Lyly's *Endimion*, IV, ii, 9-12.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

---

PAN. Tut, man, I mean thou 'lt lose the flood : and, in losing the flood, lose thy voyage, and, in losing thy voyage, lose thy master, and, in losing thy master, lose thy service, and, in losing thy service, — Why dost thou stop my mouth ?

LAUNCE. For fear thou shouldst lose thy tongue.

PAN. Where should I lose my tongue ?

LAUNCE. In thy tale.

PAN. In thy tail !

LAUNCE. Lose the tide, and the voyage, and the master, and the service, and the tied ! Why, man, if the river were dry, I am able to fill it with my tears ; if the wind were down, I could drive the boat with my sighs.

PAN. Come, come away, man ; I was sent to call thee. 40

LAUNCE. Sir, call me what thou darest.

PAN. Wilt thou go ?

LAUNCE. Well, I will go.

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE IV — MILAN

#### THE DUKE'S PALACE

*Enter SILVIA, VALENTINE, and SPEED*

SIL. Servant !

VAL. Mistress ?

SPEED. Master, Sir Thurio frowns on you.

VAL. Ay, boy, it's for love.

SPEED. Not of you.

# SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

VAL. Of my mistress, then.

SPEED. 'T were good you knocked him.

[*Exit.*

SIL. Servant, you are sad.

VAL. Indeed, madam, I seem so.

THU. Seem you that you are not ?

10

VAL. Haply I do.

THU. So do counterfeits.

VAL. So do you.

THU. What seem I that I am not ?

VAL. Wise.

THU. What instance of the contrary ?

VAL. Your folly.

THU. And how quote you my folly ?

VAL. I quote it in your jerkin.

THU. My jerkin is a doublet.

20

VAL. Well, then, I 'll double your folly.

THU. How ?

SIL. What, angry, Sir Thurio ! do you change colour ?

VAL. Give him leave, madam ; he is a kind of chameleon.

THU. That hath more mind to feed on your blood than live in your air.

VAL. You have said, sir.

THU. Ay, sir ; and done too, for this time.

VAL. I know it well, sir ; you always end ere you begin.

SIL. A fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly so shot off.

18 *quote*] observe. Cf. *Hamlet*, II, i, 111-112 : "I am sorry that with better heed and judgment I had not *quoted* him."

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

VAL. 'T is indeed, madam ; we thank the giver.

SIL. Who is that, servant ?

VAL. Yourself, sweet lady ; for you gave the fire. Sir Thurio borrows his wit from your ladyship's looks, and spends what he borrows kindly in your company.

THU. Sir, if you spend word for word with me, I shall make your wit bankrupt.

VAL. I know it well, sir ; you have an exchequer of words, and, I think, no other treasure to give your followers, for it appears, by their bare liveries, that they live by your bare words.

SIL. No more, gentlemen, no more : — here comes my father.

*Enter DUKE*

DUKE. Now, daughter Silvia, you are hard beset. Sir Valentine, your father's in good health : What say you to a letter from your friends Of much good news ?

VAL. My lord, I will be thankful To any happy messenger from thence.

DUKE. Know ye Don Antonio, your countryman ? 50

VAL. Ay, my good lord, I know the gentleman To be of worth, and worthy estimation, And not without desert so well reputed.

DUKE. Hath he not a son ?

VAL. Ay, my good lord ; a son that well deserves The honour and regard of such a father.

DUKE. You know him well ?

VAL. I know him as myself ; for from our infancy We have conversed and spent our hours together :

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

And though myself have been an idle truant, 60  
 Omitting the sweet benefit of time  
 To clothe mine age with angel-like perfection,  
 Yet hath Sir Proteus, for that 's his name,  
 Made use and fair advantage of his days ;  
 His years but young, but his experience old ;  
 His head unmellow'd but his judgement ripe ;  
 And, in a word, for far behind his worth  
 Comes all the praises that I now bestow,  
 He is complete in feature and in mind  
 With all good grace to grace a gentleman. 70

DUKE. Beshrew me, sir, but if he make this good,  
 He is as worthy for an empress' love  
 As meet to be an emperor's counsellor.  
 Well, sir, this gentleman is come to me,  
 With commendation from great potentates ;  
 And here he means to spend his time awhile :  
 I think 't is no unwelcome news to you.

VAL. Should I have wish'd a thing, it had been he.

DUKE. Welcome him, then, according to his worth.  
 Silvia, I speak to you, and you, Sir Thurio, 80  
 For Valentine, I need not cite him to it :  
 I will send him hither to you presently. [*Exit.*]

VAL. This is the gentleman I told your ladyship  
 Had come along with me, but that his mistress  
 Did hold his eyes lock'd in her crystal looks.

SIL. Belike that now she hath enfranchised them,  
 Upon some other pawn for fealty.

VAL. Nay, sure, I think she holds them prisoners  
 still.



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT II

SIL. Nay, then, he should be blind ; and, being blind,  
How could he see his way to seek out you ? 90

VAL. Why, lady, Love hath twenty pair of eyes.

THU. They say that Love hath not an eye at all.

VAL. To see such lovers, Thurio, as yourself :

Upon a homely object Love can wink.

SIL. Have done, have done ; here comes the gentleman.

*Enter PROTEUS*

VAL. Welcome, dear Proteus ! Mistress, I beseech  
you,

Confirm his welcome with some special favour.

SIL. His worth is warrant for his welcome hither,  
If this be he you oft have wish'd to hear from.

VAL. Mistress, it is : sweet lady, entertain him 100  
To be my fellow-servant to your ladyship.

SIL. Too low a mistress for so high a servant.

PRO. Not so, sweet lady : but too mean a servant  
To have a look of such a worthy mistress.

VAL. Leave off discourse of disability :  
Sweet lady, entertain him for your servant.

PRO. My duty will I boast of ; nothing else.

SIL. And duty never yet did want his meed :  
Servant, you are welcome to a worthless mistress.

PRO. I 'll die on him that says so but yourself. 110

SIL. That you are welcome ?

PRO. That you are worthless.

---

110 *I 'll die on him]* I 'll challenge him to mortal combat. Cf. *Look about you.* (Dodsley's 'Old Plays,' VII, 442). "*I 'll die upon the slanderer.*"

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

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*Enter SERVANT*

SERV. Madam, my lord your father would speak with you.

SIL. I wait upon his pleasure. [*Exit Serv.*] Come, Sir Thurio,

Go with me. Once more, new servant, welcome :

I'll leave you to confer of home affairs ;

When you have done, we look to hear from you.

PRO. We'll both attend upon your ladyship.

[*Exeunt Silvia and Thurio.*]

VAL. Now, tell me, how do all from whence you came ?

PRO. Your friends are well, and have them much commended.

VAL. And how do yours ?

PRO. I left them all in health. 190

VAL. How does your lady ? and how thrives your love ?

PRO. My tales of love were wont to weary you ;

I know you joy not in a love-discourse.

VAL. Ay, Proteus, but that life is alter'd now :

I have done penance for contemning Love,

Whose high imperious thoughts have punish'd me

With bitter fasts, with penitential groans,

With nightly tears, and daily heart-sore sighs ;

For, in revenge of my contempt of love,

Love hath chased sleep from my enthralled eyes, 190

And made them watchers of mine own heart's sorrow.

O gentle Proteus, Love's a mighty lord,

And hath so humbled me, as I confess

There is no woe to his correction,

Nor to his service no such joy on earth.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

---

Now no discourse, except it be of love ;  
Now can I break my fast, dine, sup and sleep,  
Upon the very naked name of love.

PRO. Enough ; I read your fortune in your eye.  
Was this the idol that you worship so ?

140

VAL. Even she ; and is she not a heavenly saint ?

PRO. No ; but she is an earthly paragon.

VAL. Call her divine.

PRO. I will not flatter her.

VAL. O, flatter me ; for love delights in praises.

PRO. When I was sick, you gave me bitter pills ;  
And I must minister the like to you.

VAL. Then speak the truth by her ; if not divine,  
Yet let her be a principality,  
Sovereign to all the creatures on the earth.

PRO. Except my mistress.

VAL. Sweet, except not any ;  
Except thou wilt except against my love.

150

PRO. Have I not reason to prefer mine own ?

VAL. And I will help thee to prefer her too :  
She shall be dignified with this high honour, —  
To bear my lady's train, lest the base earth  
Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss,  
And, of so great a favour growing proud,  
Disdain to root the summer-swelling flower,  
And make rough winter everlastingly.

---

148 *a principality*] a high order of angels. Cf. *Romans*, viii, 38, "nor angels, nor *principalities*, nor powers."

158 *summer-swelling*] expanding in summer into full bloom. Cf. "aestate tumentes," used of the shore in Lucan's *Pharsalia*,

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

PRO. Why, Valentine, what braggardism is this ? 160

VAL. Pardon me, Proteus: all I can is nothing  
To her, whose worth makes other worthies nothing;  
She is alone.

PRO. Then let her alone.

VAL. Not for the world: why, man, she is mine own;  
And I as rich in having such a jewel  
As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,  
The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold.  
Forgive me, that I do not dream on thee,  
Because thou see'st me dote upon my love.  
My foolish rival, that her father likes 170  
Only for his possessions are so huge,  
Is gone with her along; and I must after,  
For love, thou know'st, is full of jealousy.

PRO. But she loves you?

VAL. Ay, and we are betroth'd: nay, more, our  
marriage-hour,  
With all the cunning manner of our flight,  
Determined of; how I must climb her window;  
The ladder made of cords; and all the means  
Plotted and 'greed on for my happiness.  
Good Proteus, go with me to my chamber, 180  
In these affairs to aid me with thy counsel.

PRO. Go on before; I shall inquire you forth  
I must unto the road, to disembark  
Some necessities that I needs must use;  
And then I'll presently attend you.

---

and translated by Sir Arthur Gorges (1614, Bk. VIII, p. 354) as  
"sommer-swelling."

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT II

---

VAL. Will you make haste ?

PRO. I will.

[*Exit Val.*

Even as one heat another heat expels,  
Or as one nail by strength drives out another,  
So the remembrance of my former love  
Is by a newer object quite forgotten.

190

Is it mine, or Valentine's praise,  
Her true perfection, or my false transgression,  
That makes me reasonless to reason thus ?

She is fair ; and so is Julia, that I love, —  
That I did love, for now my love is thaw'd ;  
Which, like a waxen image 'gainst a fire,  
Bears no impression of the thing it was.

Methinks my zeal to Valentine is cold,  
And that I love him not as I was wont.

200

O, but I love his lady too too much !  
And that's the reason I love him so little.  
How shall I dote on her with more advice,  
That thus without advice begin to love her !

'Tis but her picture I have yet beheld,  
And that hath dazzled my reason's light ;  
But when I look on her perfections.

There is no reason but I shall be blind.

If I can check my erring love, I will ;  
If not, to compass her I'll use my skill.

[*Exit.*    210

192] This is the Folio reading. A word is certainly wanting to complete the sense. Theobald read, "Is it mine *eye* or *Valentino's* praise." Malone read, "Is it *her mien* or *Valentinus'* praise." Theobald's emendation seems the better.

SCENE V TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

SCENE V — THE SAME

A STREET

*Enter SPEED and LAUNCE severally*

SPEED. Launce! by mine honesty, welcome to Padua!

LAUNCE. Forswear not thyself, sweet youth; for I am not welcome. I reckon this always — that a man is never undone till he be hanged; nor never welcome to a place till some certain shot be paid, and the hostess say "Welcome!"

SPEED. Come on, you madcap, I'll to the alehouse with you presently; where, for one shot of five pence, thou shalt have five thousand welcomes. But, sirrah, how did thy master part with Madam Julia?

LAUNCE. Marry, after they closed in earnest, they parted very fairly in jest.

SPEED. But shall she marry him?

LAUNCE. No.

SPEED. How, then? shall he marry her?

LAUNCE. No, neither.

SPEED. What, are they broken?

LAUNCE. No, they are both as whole as a fish.

SPEED. Why, then, how stands the matter with them?

LAUNCE. Marry, thus; when it stands well with him, it stands well with her.

SPEED. What an ass art thou! I understand thee not.

LAUNCE. What a block art thou, that thou canst not! My staff understands me.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

---

SPEED. What thou sayest ?

LAUNCE. Ay, and what I do too : look thee, I'll but lean, and my staff understands me.

SPEED. It stands under thee, indeed.

LAUNCE. Why, stand-under and under-stand is all one.

SPEED. But tell me true, will't be a match ?

LAUNCE. Ask my dog : if he say ay, it will ; if he say, no, it will ; if he shake his tail and say nothing, it will.

SPEED. The conclusion is, then, that it will.

LAUNCE. Thou shalt never get such a secret from me but by a parable.

SPEED. 'Tis well that I get it so. But, Launce, how sayest thou, that my master is become a notable lover ?

LAUNCE. I never knew him otherwise.

SPEED. Than how ?

LAUNCE. A notable lubber, as thou reportest him to be.

SPEED. Why, thou whoreson ass, thou mistakest me. 40

LAUNCE. Why fool, I meant not thee ; I meant thy master.

SPEED. I tell thee, my master is become a hot lover.

LAUNCE. Why, I tell thee, I care not though he burn himself in love. If thou wilt, go with me to the ale-house ; if not, thou art an Hebrew, a Jew, and not worth the name of a Christian.

SPEED. Why ?

## SCENE VI TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

LAUNCE. Because thou hast not so much charity in thee as to go to the ale with a Christian. Wilt thou go?

SPEED. At thy service.

[*Exeunt.* 80]

### SCENE VI — THE SAME

#### THE DUKE'S PALACE

*Enter* PROTEUS

PRO. To leave my Julia, shall I be forsworn ;  
To love fair Silvia, shall I be forsworn ;  
To wrong my friend, I shall be much forsworn ;  
And even that power, which gave me first my oath,  
Provokes me to this threefold perjury ;  
Love bade me swear, and love bids me forswear.  
O sweet-suggesting Love, if thou hast sinn'd,  
Teach me, thy tempted subject, to excuse it !  
At first I did adore a twinkling star,  
But now I worship a celestial sun.  
Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken ;  
And he wants wit that wants resolved will  
To learn his wit to exchange the bad for better.  
Fie, fie, unreverend tongue ! to call her bad,  
Whose sovereignty so oft thou hast preferr'd

10

---

49 *ale*] A quibble on two colloquial senses of the word, *i. e.*, "ale-house," and "festivity." In the latter sense the monosyllable is often treated as a terminative particle, *e. g.*, "Bride-ale" (*i. e.*, wedding-festivity) and "church-ale," a festivity when money was collected for church purposes.



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

---

With twenty thousand soul-confirming oaths.

I cannot leave to love, and yet I do ;

For there I leave to love where I should love.

Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose :

If I keep them, I needs must lose myself ;

20

If I lose them, thus find I by their loss

For Valentine, myself, for Julia, Silvia.

I to myself am dearer than a friend,

For love is still most precious in itself ;

And Silvia — witness Heaven, that made her fair ! —

Shows Julia but a swarthy Ethiope.

I will forget that Julia is alive,

Remembering that my love to her is dead ;

And Valentine I'll hold an enemy,

Aiming at Silvia as a sweeter friend.

30

I cannot now prove constant to myself,

Without some treachery used to Valentine.

This night he meaneth with a corded ladder

To climb celestial Silvia's chamber-window ;

Myself in counsel, his competitor.

Now presently I'll give her father notice

Of their disguising and pretended flight ;

Who, all enraged, will banish Valentine ;

For Thurio, he intends, shall wed his daughter ;

But, Valentine being gone, I'll quickly cross

40

By some sly trick blunt Thurio's dull proceeding.

Love, lend me wings to make my purpose swift,

As thou hast lent me wit to plot this drift !

[*Exit.*

## SCENE VII TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

### SCENE VII—VERONA

#### JULIA'S HOUSE

*Enter JULIA and LUCETTA*

JUL. Counsel, Lucetta ; gentle girl, assist me ;  
And, even in kind love, I do conjure thee,  
Who art the table wherein all my thoughts  
Are visibly character'd and engraved,  
To lesson me ; and tell me some good mean,  
How, with my honour, I may undertake  
A journey to my loving Proteus.

LUC. Alas, the way is wearisome and long !

JUL. A true-devoted pilgrim is not weary  
To measure kingdoms with his feeble steps ; 10  
Much less shall she that hath Love's wings to fly,  
And when the flight is made to one so dear,  
Of such divine perfection, as Sir Proteus.

LUC. Better forbear till Proteus make return.

JUL. O, know'st thou not, his looks are my soul's  
food ?

Pity the dearth that I have pined in,  
By longing for that food so long a time.  
Didst thou but know the inly touch of love,  
Thou wouldst as soon go kindle fire with snow  
As seek to quench the fire of love with words. 20

LUC. I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,

\* *character'd*] The word is here accented on the second syllable.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

---

But qualify the fire's extreme rage,  
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.

JUL. The more thou damm'st it up, the more it  
burns.

The current that with gentle murmur glides,  
Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage ;  
But when his fair course is not hindered,  
He makes sweet music with the enamell'd stones,  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage ;  
And so by many winding nooks he strays,  
With willing sport, to the wild ocean.  
Then let me go, and hinder not my course :  
I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,  
And make a pastime of each weary step,  
Till the last step have brought me to my love ;  
And there I'll rest, as after much turmoil  
A blessed soul doth in Elysium.

30

LUC. But in what habit will you go along ?

JUL. Not like a woman ; for I would prevent  
The loose encounters of lascivious men :  
Gentle Lucetta, fit me with such weeds  
As may beseem some well-reputed page.

40

LUC. Why, then, your ladyship must cut your hair.

JUL. No, girl ; I'll knit it up with silken strings  
With twenty odd-conceited true-love knots.  
To be fantastic may become a youth  
Of greater time than I shall show to be.

LUC. What fashion, madam, shall I make your  
breeches ?

## SCENE VII TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

JUL. That fits as well as, "Tell me, good my lord, 50  
What compass will you wear your farthingale?"

Why even what fashion thou best likest, Lucetta.

LUC. You must needs have them with a codpiece,  
madam.

JUL. Out, out, Lucetta! that will be ill-favour'd.

LUC. A round hose, madam, now 's not worth a pin,  
Unless you have a codpiece to stick pins on.

JUL. Lucetta, as thou lovest me, let me have  
What thou think'st meet, and is most mannerly.  
But tell me, wench, how will the world repute me  
For undertaking so unstaïd a journey? 60  
I fear me, it will make me scandalized. '

LUC. If you think so, then stay at home, and go not.

JUL. Nay, that I will not.

LUC. Then never dream on infamy, but go.  
If Proteus like your journey when you come,  
No matter who 's displeased when you are gone:  
I fear me, he will scarce be pleased withal.

JUL. That is the least, Lucetta, of my fear:  
A thousand oaths, an ocean of his tears,  
And instances of infinite of love, 70  
Warrant me welcome to my Proteus.

LUC. All these are servants to deceitful men.

JUL. Base men, that use them to so base effect!  
But truer stars did govern Proteus' birth:  
His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles;  
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate;

70 *instances . . . of love*] proofs of love's infinity.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT II

---

His tears pure messengers sent from his heart ;  
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.

LUC. Pray heaven he prove so, when you come to him !

JUL. Now, as thou lovest me, do him not that wrong, 90  
To bear a hard opinion of his truth :  
Only deserve my love by loving him ;  
And presently go with me to my chamber,  
To take a note of what I stand in need of,  
To furnish me upon my longing journey.  
All that is mine I leave at thy dispose,  
My goods, my lands, my reputation ;  
Only, in lieu thereof, dispatch me hence.  
Come, answer not, but to it presently !  
I am impatient of my tarriance.

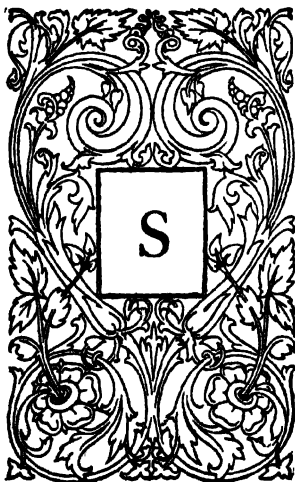
[*Exeunt.* 90]



ACT THIRD—SCENE I—MILAN  
*ANTE-ROOM IN THE DUKE'S PALACE*

*Enter DUKE, THURIO, and PROTEUS*

DUKE



SIR THURIO, GIVE US  
leave, I pray awhile ;  
We have some secrets to confer  
about. *[Exit Thu.]*

Now, tell me, Proteus, what's  
your will with me ?

PRO. My gracious lord, that  
which I would discover  
The law of friendship bids me to  
conceal ;  
But when I call to mind your  
gracious favours

Done to me, undeserving as I am,

My duty pricks me on to utter that  
Which else no worldly good should draw from me.  
Know, worthy prince, Sir Valentine, my friend,  
This night intends to steal away your daughter :

10

*I give us leave] withdraw.*

**TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT III**

Myself am one made privy to the plot.  
I know you have determined to bestow her  
On Thurio, whom your gentle daughter hates ;  
And should she thus be stol'n away from you,  
It would be much vexation to your age.  
Thus, for my duty's sake, I rather chose  
To cross my friend in his intended drift  
Than, by concealing it, heap on your head  
A pack of sorrows, which would press you down,  
Being unprevented, to your timeless grave.

DUKE. Proteus, I thank thee for thine honest care ;  
Which to requite, command me while I live.  
This love of theirs myself have often seen,  
Haply when they have judged me fast asleep ;  
And oftentimes have purposed to forbid  
Sir Valentine her company and my court :  
But, fearing lest my jealous aim might err,  
And so, unworthily disgrace the man,  
A rashness that I ever yet have shunn'd,  
I gave him gentle looks ; thereby to find  
That which thyself hast now disclosed to me.  
And, that thou mayst perceive my fear of this,  
Knowing that tender youth is soon suggested,  
I nightly lodge her in an upper tower,  
The key whereof myself have ever kept ;  
And thence she cannot be convey'd away.

PRO. Know, noble lord, they have devised a mean  
How he her chamber-window will ascend,  
And with a corded ladder fetch her down ;  
For which the youthful lover now is gone,

## SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

And this way comes he with it presently ;  
Where, if it please you, you may intercept him.  
But, good my Lord, do it so cunningly  
That my discovery be not aimed at ;  
For, love of you, not hate unto my friend,  
Hath made me publisher of this pretence.

DUKE. Upon mine honour, he shall never know  
That I had any light from thee of this.

PRO. Adieu, my Lord ; Sir Valentine is coming. [*Exit.* 50

*Enter VALENTINE*

DUKE. Sir Valentine, whither away so fast ?

VAL. Please it your grace, there is a messenger  
That stays to bear my letters to my friends,  
And I am going to deliver them.

DUKE. Be they of much import ?

VAL. The tenour of them doth but signify  
My health and happy being at your court.

DUKE. Nay then, no matter ; stay with me awhile ;  
I am to break with thee of some affairs  
That touch me near, wherein thou must be secret. 60  
'T is not unknown to thee that I have sought  
To match my friend Sir Thurio to my daughter.

VAL. I know it well, my Lord ; and, sure, the match  
Were rich and honourable ; besides, the gentleman  
Is full of virtue, bounty, worth and qualities  
Beseeming such a wife as your fair daughter :  
Cannot your Grace win her to fancy him ?

DUKE. No, trust me ; she is peevish, sullen, froward,  
Proud, disobedient, stubborn, lacking duty ;



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT III

Neither regarding that she is my child, 70  
 Nor fearing me as if I were her father :  
 And, may I say to thee, this pride of hers,  
 Upon advice, hath drawn my love from her ;  
 And, where I thought the remnant of mine age  
 Should have been cherish'd by her child-like duty,  
 I now am full resolved to take a wife,  
 And turn her out to who will take her in :  
 Then let her beauty be her wedding-dower ;  
 For me and my possessions she esteems not.

VAL. What would your Grace have me to do in  
 this ? 80

DUKE. There is a lady in Verona here  
 Whom I affect ; but she is nice and coy,  
 And nought esteems my aged eloquence :  
 Now, therefore, would I have thee to my tutor, —  
 For long ago I have forgot to court ;  
 Besides, the fashion of the time is changed, —  
 How and which way I may bestow myself,  
 To be regarded in her sun-bright eye.

VAL. Win her with gifts, if she respect not words :  
 Dumb jewels often in their silent kind 90  
 More than quick words do move a woman's mind.

DUKE. But she did scorn a present that I sent her.

---

81 in *Verona*] This is the reading of the Folio. The present scene passes in *Milan*. Suggested readings are in *Milan*, or *Milano*, and of *Verona*. Of *Verona* makes the better sense, while the textual change is very slight. Cf. V, iv, 129, *infra*.

89-91] Cf. Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, Sestiad II, "a gift prevails When deep persuading oratory fails."

## SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

VAL. A woman sometime scorns what best contents  
her.

Send<sup>a</sup>her another ; never give her o'er ;  
For scorn at first makes after-love the more.  
If she do frown, 't is not in hate of you,  
But rather to beget more love in you :  
If she do chide, 't is not to have you gone ;  
For why, the fools are mad, if left alone.  
Take no repulse, whatever she doth say ; 100  
For "get you gone," she doth not mean "away !"  
Flatter and praise, commend, extol their graces ;  
Though ne'er so black, say they have angels' faces.  
That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,  
If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.

DUKE. But she I mean is promised by her friends  
Unto a youthful gentleman of worth ;  
And kept severely from resort of men,  
That no man hath access by day to her.

VAL. Why, then, I would resort to her by night. 110

DUKE. Ay, but the doors be lock'd, and keys kept safe,  
That no man hath recourse to her by night.

VAL. What lets but one may enter at her window ?

DUKE. Her chamber is aloft, far from the ground,  
And built so shelving, that one cannot climb it  
Without apparent hazard of his life.

VAL. Why, then, a ladder, quaintly made of cords,  
To cast up, with a pair of anchoring hooks,  
Would serve to scale another Hero's tower,

119 *Hero*] see note on I, i, 22, *supra*.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT III

So bold Leander would adventure it.

190

DUKE. Now, as thou art a gentleman of blood,  
Advise me where I may have such a ladder.

VAL. When would you use it? pray, sir, tell me that.

DUKE. This very night; for Love is like a child,  
That longs for every thing that he can come by.

VAL. By seven o'clock I'll get you such a ladder.

DUKE. But, hark thee; I will go to her alone:  
How shall I best convey the ladder thither?

VAL. It will be light, my lord, that you may bear it  
Under a cloak that is of any length.

130

DUKE. A cloak as long as thine will serve the turn?

VAL. Ay, my good lord.

DUKE. Then let me see thy cloak:  
I'll get me one of such another length.

VAL. Why, any cloak will serve the turn, my lord.

DUKE. How shall I fashion me to wear a cloak?  
I pray thee, let me feel thy cloak upon me.  
What letter is this same? What's here? To "Silvia"!  
And here an engine fit for my proceeding.  
I'll be so bold to break the seal for once.

[*Reads.*

"My thoughts do harbour with my Silvia nightly;

140

And slaves they are to me, that send them flying:

O, could their master come and go as lightly,

Himself would lodge where senseless they are lying!

My herald thoughts in thy pure bosom rest them;

While I, their king, that thither them importune,

Do curse the grace that with such grace hath bless'd them,

Because myself do want my servants' fortune:

I curse myself, for they are sent by me,

That they should harbour where their lord would be."

## SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

What's here?

150

"Silvia, this night I will enfranchise thee."

\*  
'Tis so; and here's the ladder for the purpose.  
Why, Phaethon, — for thou art Merops' son, —  
Wilt thou aspire to guide the heavenly car,  
And with thy daring folly burn the world?  
Wilt thou reach stars, because they shine on thee?  
Go, base intruder! overweening slave!

Bestow thy fawning smiles on equal mates;  
And think my patience, more than thy desert,  
Is privilege for thy departure hence:

160

Thank me for this more than for all the favours,  
Which all too much I have bestow'd on thee.

But if thou linger in my territories

Longer than swiftest expedition

Will give thee time to leave our royal court,

By heaven! my wrath shall far exceed the love

I ever bore my daughter or thyself.

Be gone! I will not hear thy vain excuse;

But, as thou lovest thy life, make speed from hence. [*Exit.*]

VAL. And why not death rather than living torment? 170

To die is to be banish'd from myself;

And Silvia is myself: banish'd from her,

Is self from self: a deadly banishment!

---

153 *Phaethon*] See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, II, 31 *seq.*, for the story of Phaethon, and his doubts whether Merops, a mere mortal, were his father. A like mention of Phaethon "mistrusting silly Merops for his sire" figures in the pre-Shakespearean play of *King John*, 1591. 171-173 *To die . . . banishment!*] Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, III, iii, 19-21, 40-43.

# TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT III

---

What light is light, if Silvia be not seen ?  
 What joy is joy, if Silvia be not by ?  
 Unless it be to think that she is by,  
 And feed upon the shadow of perfection.  
 Except I be by Silvia in the night,  
 There is no music in the nightingale ;  
 Unless I look on Silvia in the day,  
 There is no day for me to look upon :  
 She is my essence ; and I leave to be,  
 If I be not by her fair influence  
 Foster'd, illumined, cherish'd, kept alive.  
 I fly not death, to fly his deadly doom :  
 Tarry I here, I but attend on death :  
 But, fly I hence, I fly away from life.

180

*Enter PROTEUS and LAUNCE*

PRO. Run, boy, run, run, and seek him out.

LAUNCE. Soho, soho !

PRO. What seest thou ?

190

LAUNCE. Him we go to find : there's not a hair on's  
 head but 't is a Valentine.

PRO. Valentine ?

VAL. No.

PRO. Who then ? his spirit ?

VAL. Neither.

PRO. What then ?

VAL. Nothing.

182 *leave to be*] cease to be, die.

189 *Soho*] the cry raised by hunters of the *hare*, when the quarry was found. Hence the quibble on *hair* in line 191.

## SCENE 1 TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

LAUNCE. Can nothing speak? Master, shall I strike?

PRO. Who wouldst thou strike?

900

LAUNCE. Nothing.

PRO. Villain, forbear.

LAUNCE. Why, sir, I'll strike nothing: I pray you, —

PRO. Sirrah, I say, forbear. Friend Valentine, a word.

VAL. My ears are stopt, and cannot hear good news,  
So much of bad already hath possess'd them.

PRO. Then in dumb silence will I bury mine,  
For they are harsh, untuneable, and bad.

VAL. Is Silvia dead?

PRO. No, Valentine.

910

VAL. No Valentine, indeed, for sacred Silvia.  
Hath she forsworn me?

PRO. No, Valentine.

VAL. No Valentine, if Silvia have forsworn me.  
What is your news?

LAUNCE. Sir, there is a proclamation that you are  
vanished.

PRO. That thou art banished — O, that 's the  
news! —

From hence, from Silvia, and from me thy friend.

VAL. O, I have fed upon this woe already,  
And now excess of it will make me surfeit.  
Doth Silvia know that I am banished?

920

PRO. Ay, ay; and she hath offer'd to the doom —  
Which, unreversed, stands in effectual force —  
A sea of melting pearl, which some call tears:  
Those at her father's churlish feet she tender'd;

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT III

---

With them, upon her knees, her humble self ;  
Wringing her hands, whose whiteness so became them  
As if but now they waxed pale for woe :  
But neither bended knees, pure hands held up,  
Sad sighs, deep groans, nor silver-shedding tears,        230  
Could penetrate her uncompassionate sire ;  
But Valentine, if he be ta'en, must die.  
Besides, her intercession chafed him so,  
When she for thy repeal was suppliant,  
That to close prison he commanded her,  
With many bitter threats of bidding there.

VAL. No more ; unless the next word that thou  
      speak'st

Have some malignant power upon my life :  
If so, I pray thee, breathe it in mine ear,  
As ending anthem of my endless dolour.        240

PRO. Cease to lament for that thou canst not help,  
And study help for that which thou lament'st.  
Time is the nurse and breeder of all good.  
Here if thou stay, thou canst not see thy love ;  
Besides, thy staying will abridge thy life.  
Hope is a lover's staff ; walk hence with that,  
And manage it against despairing thoughts.  
Thy letters may be here, though thou art hence ;  
Which, being writ to me, shall be deliver'd  
Even in the milk-white bosom of thy love.        250  
The time now serves not to expostulate :  
Come, I'll convey thee through the city-gate ;  
And, ere I part with thee, confer at large  
Of all that may concern thy love-affairs.

## SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

As thou lovest Silvia, though not for thyself,  
 Regard thy danger, and along with me!

VAL. I pray thee, Launce, an if thou seest my boy,  
 Bid him make haste, and meet me at the North-gate.

PRO. Go, sirrah, find him out. Come, Valentine.

VAL. O my dear Silvia! Hapless Valentine!

260

[*Exeunt VAL. and PRO.*]

LAUNCE. I am but a fool, look you; and yet I have the wit to think my master is a kind of a knave: but that's all one, if he be but one knave. He lives not now that knows me to be in love; yet I am in love; but a team of horse shall not pluck that from me; nor who 'tis I love; and yet 'tis a woman; but what woman, I will not tell myself; and yet 'tis a milk-maid; yet 'tis not a maid, for she hath had gossips; yet 'tis a maid, for she is her master's maid, and serves for wages. She hath more qualities than a water-spaniel, — which is much in a bare Christian. [*Pulling out a paper*] Here is the cate-log of her condition. "Imprimis: She can fetch and carry." Why, a horse can do no more: nay, a horse cannot fetch, but only carry; therefore is she better than a jade. "Item: She can milk;" look you, a sweet virtue in a maid with clean hands.

263 *one knave*] a *single*, not a *double* villain. . The poor quibble is often met with. Cf. Richard Edward's *Damon and Pythias*, 1571 (Dodsley's "Old Plays" iv, 20): "You lose money by him if you sell him for *one knave*; for he serves for twain."

268 *gossips*] The word means women attending a lying-in as well as sponsors or god-parents.



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT III

*Enter SPEED*

SPEED. How now, Signior Launce! what news with your mastership?

LAUNCE. With my master's ship? why, it is at sea.

SPEED. Well, your old vice still; mistake the word. What news, then, in your paper? 280

LAUNCE. The blackest news that ever thou heardest.

SPEED. Why, man, how black?

LAUNCE. Why, as black as ink.

SPEED. Let me read them.

LAUNCE. Fie on thee, jolt-head! thou canst not read.

SPEED. Thou liest; I can.

LAUNCE. I will try thee. Tell me this: who begot thee?

SPEED. Marry, the son of my grandfather.

LAUNCE. O illiterate loiterer! it was the son of thy grandmother: this proves that thou canst not read. 290

SPEED. Come, fool, come; try me in thy paper.

LAUNCE. There; and Saint Nicholas be thy speed!

SPEED. [*reads*] "Imprimis: She can milk."

LAUNCE. Ay, that she can.

SPEED. "Item: She brews good ale."

LAUNCE. And thereof comes the proverb: "Blessing of your heart, you brew good ale."

292 *St. Nicholas*] St. Nicholas was the patron saint of clerks and scholars.

296 "*Blessing of your heart . . . ale*" Ben Jonson makes allusion to the same proverb in his *Masque of Augurs*:

"Our ale's o' the best,  
And each good guest,  
Prays for their souls that brew it."

SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

SPEED. "Item : She can sew."

LAUNCE. That 's as much as to say, Can she ~~se~~ ?

SPEED. "Item : She can knit."

300

LAUNCE. What need a man care for a stock with a wench, when she can knit him a stock ?

SPEED. "Item : She can wash and scour."

LAUNCE. A special virtue ; for then she need not be washed and scoured.

SPEED. "Item : She can spin."

LAUNCE. Then may I set the world on wheels, when she can spin for her living.

SPEED. "Item : She hath many nameless virtues." 309

LAUNCE. That 's as much as to say, bastard virtues ; that, indeed, know not their fathers, and therefore have no names.

SPEED. "Here follow her vices."

LAUNCE. Close at the heels of her virtues.

SPEED. "Item : She is not to be kissed fasting, in respect of her breath."

LAUNCE. Well, that fault may be mended with a breakfast. Read on.

SPEED. "Item : She hath a sweet mouth."

LAUNCE. That makes amends for her sour breath. 320

SPEED. "Item : She doth talk in her sleep."

LAUNCE. It 's no matter for that, so she sleep not in her talk.

SPEED. "Item : She is slow in words."

LAUNCE. O villain, that set this down among her

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT III

---

vices! To be slow in words is a woman's only virtue: I pray thee, out with 't, and place it for her chief virtue.

SPEED. "Item: She is proud."

LAUNCE. Out with that too; it was Eve's legacy, and cannot be ta'en from her. 330

SPEED. "Item: She hath no teeth."

LAUNCE. I care not for that neither, because I love crusts.

SPEED. "Item: she is curst."

LAUNCE. Well, the best is, she hath no teeth to bite.

SPEED. "Item: She will often praise her liquor."

LAUNCE. If her liquor be good, she shall: if she will not, I will; for good things should be praised.

SPEED. "Item: She is too liberal." 339

LAUNCE. Of her tongue she cannot, for that's writ down she is slow of; of her purse she shall not, for that I'll keep shut: now, of another thing she may, and that cannot I help. Well, proceed.

SPEED. "Item: She hath more hair than wit, and more faults than hairs, and more wealth than faults."

LAUNCE. Stop there; I'll have her: she was mine, and not mine, twice or thrice in that last article. Rehearse that once more.

SPEED. "Item: She hath more hair than wit," — 349

LAUNCE. More hair than wit? It may be; I'll prove

---

344 *more hair than wit*] An old proverb, implying that abundance of hair denotes scarcity of wisdom.

## SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

it. The cover of the salt hides the salt, and therefore it is more than the salt; the hair that covers the wit is more than the wit, for the greater hides the less. What's next?

SPEED. "And more faults than hairs," —

LAUNCE. That's monstrous: O, that that were out!

SPEED. "And more wealth than faults."

LAUNCE. Why, that word makes the faults gracious. Well, I'll have her: and if it be a match, as nothing is impossible, —

SPEED. What then?

360

LAUNCE. Why, then will I tell thee — that thy master stays for thee at the North-gate?

SPEED. For me?

LAUNCE. For thee! ay, who art thou? he hath stayed for a better man than thee.

SPEED. And must I go to him?

LAUNCE. Thou must run to him, for thou hast stayed so long, that going will scarce serve the turn.

SPEED. Why didst not tell me sooner? pox of your love-letters!

[Exit. 370

LAUNCE. Now will he be swinged for reading my letter, — an unmannerly slave, that will thrust himself into secrets! I'll after, to rejoice in the boy's correction.

[Exit.

351 of the salt] i. e., of the salt cellar, which was commonly a large ornamental piece of plate set at the head of the dinner-table.

357 the faults gracious] the faults acceptable. Cf. *M. Wives*, III, iv,

32-33:

"O what a world of vile ill-favoured faults  
Looks handsome in three hundred pounds a year."

[ 61 ]

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT III

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### SCENE II—THE SAME

#### *THE DUKE'S PALACE*

*Enter DUKE and THURIO*

DUKE. Sir Thurio, fear not but that she will love you,  
Now Valentine is banish'd from her sight.

THU. Since his exile she hath despised me most,  
Forsworn my company, and rail'd at me,  
That I am desperate of obtaining her.

DUKE. This weak impress of love is as a figure  
Trenched in ice, which with an hour's heat  
Dissolves to water, and doth lose his form.  
A little time will melt her frozen thoughts,  
And worthless Valentine shall be forgot.

10

*Enter PROTEUS*

How now, Sir Proteus! Is your countryman,  
According to our proclamation, gone?

PRO. Gone, my good lord.

DUKE. My daughter takes his going grievously.

PRO. A little time, my lord, will kill that grief.

DUKE. So I believe; but Thurio thinks not so.  
Proteus, the good conceit I hold of thee —  
For thou hast shown some sign of good desert —  
Makes me the better to confer with thee.

PRO. Longer than I prove loyal to your Grace  
Let me not live to look upon your Grace.

20

DUKE. Thou know'st how willingly I would effect  
The match between Sir Thurio and my daughter.

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

PRO. I do, my lord.

DUKE. And also, I think, thou art not ignorant  
How she opposes her against my will.

PRO. She did, my lord, when Valentine was here.

DUKE. Ay, and perversely she perseveres so.  
What might we do to make the girl forget  
The love of Valentine, and love Sir Thurio ?

30

PRO. The best way is to slander Valentine  
With falsehood, cowardice and poor descent,  
Three things that women highly hold in hate.

DUKE. Ay, but she 'll think that it is spoke in  
hate.

PRO. Ay, if his enemy deliver it :  
Therefore it must with circumstance be spoken  
By one whom she esteemeth as his friend.

DUKE. Then you must undertake to slander him.

PRO. And that, my lord, I shall be loath to do :  
'T is an ill office for a gentleman,  
Especially against his very friend.

40

DUKE. Where your good word cannot advantage him,  
Your slander never can endamage him ;  
Therefore the office is indifferent,  
Being entreated to it by your friend.

PRO. You have prevail'd, my lord : if I can do it  
By aught that I can speak in his dispraise,  
She shall not long continue love to him.  
But say this weed her love from Valentine,  
It follows not that she will love Sir Thurio.

50

THU. Therefore, as you unwind her love from him,  
Lest it should ravel and be good to none,

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT III

---

You must provide to bottom it on me ;  
Which must be done by praising me as much  
As you in worth dispraise Sir Valentine.

DUKE. And, Proteus, we dare trust you in this kind,  
Because we know, on Valentine's report,  
You are already Love's firm votary,  
And cannot soon revolt and change your mind.

Upon this warrant shall you have access 60  
Where you with Silvia may confer at large ;  
For she is lumpish, heavy, melancholy,  
And, for your friend's sake, will be glad of you ;  
Where you may temper her by your persuasion  
To hate young Valentine and love my friend.

PRO. As much as I can do, I will effect :  
But you, Sir Thurio, are not sharp enough ;  
You must lay lime to tangle her desires  
By wailful sonnets, whose composed rhymes  
Should be full-fraught with serviceable vows. 70

DUKE. Ay,  
Much is the force of heaven-bred poesy.

PRO. Say that upon the altar of her beauty  
You sacrifice your tears, your sighs, your heart :  
Write till your ink be dry, and with your tears  
Moist it again ; and frame some feeling line  
That may discover such integrity :  
For Orpheus' lute was strung with poets' sinews ;

---

53 *bottom it on me*] A bottom is a ball of thread round which the skeins are wound. Hence "to bottom it [*i. e.* her love] on me" means to make me the ball or bottom round which to wind her love.

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

Whose golden touch could soften steel and stones,  
 Make tigers tame, and huge leviathans 80  
 Forsake unsounded deeps to dance on sands.

After your dire-lamenting elegies,  
 Visit by night your lady's chamber-window  
 With some sweet consort ; to their instruments  
 Tune a deploring dump : the night's dead silence  
 Will well become such sweet-complaining grievance.  
 This, or else nothing, will inherit her.

DUKE. This discipline shows thou hast been in love.

THU. And thy advice this night I'll put in practice.  
 Therefore, sweet Proteus, my direction-giver, 90  
 Let us into the city presently  
 To sort some gentlemen well skill'd in music.  
 I have a sonnet that will serve the turn  
 To give the onset to thy good advice.

DUKE. About it, gentlemen !

PRO. We'll wait upon your Grace till after supper,  
 And afterward determine our proceedings.

DUKE. Even now about it ! I will pardon you. [*Exeunt.*

---

84 *consort*] "concert," a band of musicians.



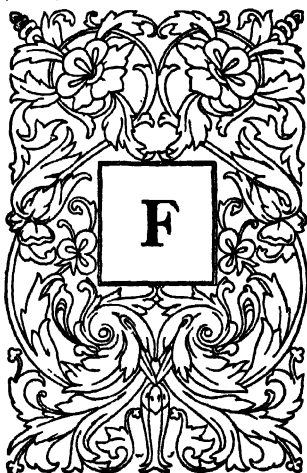


ACT FOURTH—SCENE I—THE  
FRONTIERS OF MANTUA

A FOREST

*Enter certain OUTLAWS*

FIRST OUTLAW



ELLOWS, STAND FAST; I  
see a passenger.

SEC. OUT. If there be ten,  
shrink not, but down with 'em.

*Enter VALENTINE and SPEED*

THIRD OUT. Stand, sir, and  
throw us that you have about  
ye:

If not, we'll make you sit, and  
rifle you.

SPEED. Sir, we are undone;  
these are the villains

That all the travellers do fear so much.

VAL. My friends, —

FIRST OUT. That's not so, sir: we are your enemies.

SEC. OUT. Peace! we'll hear him.

THIRD OUT. Ay, by my beard, will we, for he's a  
proper man.

## SCENE I TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

VAL. Then know that I have little wealth to lose :  
A man I am cross'd with adversity ;  
My riches are these poor habiliments,  
Of which if you should here disfurnish me,  
You take the sum and substance that I have.

SEC. OUT. Whither travel you ?

VAL. To Verona.

FIRST OUT. Whence came you ?

VAL. From Milan.

THIRD OUT. Have you long sojourned there ?

VAL. Some sixteen months, and longer might have  
stay'd,

If crooked fortune had not thwarted me.

FIRST OUT. What, were you banish'd thence ?

VAL. I was.

SEC. OUT. For what offence ?

VAL. For that which now torments me to rehearse :  
I kill'd a man, whose death I much repent ;  
But yet I slew him manfully in fight,  
Without false vantage or base treachery.

FIRST OUT. Why, ne'er repent it, if it were done so. 30  
But were you banish'd for so small a fault ?

VAL. I was, and held me glad of such a doom.

SEC. OUT. Have you the tongues ?

VAL. My youthful travel therein made me happy,  
Or else I often had been miserable

THIRD OUT. By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat  
friar,

This fellow were a king for our wild faction !

36 *Robin Hood's fat friar*] Friar Tuck.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT IV

FIRST OUT. We'll have him. Sirs, a word.

SPEED. Master, be one of them ; it's an honourable kind of thievery. 40

VAL. Peace, villain !

SEC. OUT. Tell us this : have you any thing to take to ?

VAL. Nothing but my fortune.

THIRD OUT. Know, then, that some of us are gentlemen,

Such as the fury of ungovern'd youth  
Thrust from the company of awful men :  
Myself was from Verona banished  
For practising to steal away a lady,  
An heir, and near allied unto the duke.

SEC. OUT. And I from Mantua, for a gentleman, 50  
Who, in my mood, I stabb'd unto the heart.

FIRST OUT. And I for such like petty crimes as these.  
But to the purpose, — for we cite our faults,  
That they may hold excused our lawless lives ;  
And partly, seeing you are beautified  
With goodly shape, and by your own report  
A linguist, and a man of such perfection  
As we do in our quality much want, —

SEC. OUT. Indeed, because you are a banish'd man, 60  
Therefore, above the rest, we parley to you :  
Are you content to be our general ?

46 *awful*] full of awe or respect for authority. Cf. *Rich. II*, III, iii,  
76 : "How dare thy joints forget to pay their *awful* duty."

49 *and near*] Theobald's brilliant emendation of the old reading *and*  
*Neece*.

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

To make a virtue of necessity,  
And live, as we do, in this wilderness?

THIRD OUT. What say'st thou? wilt thou be of our  
consort?

Say ay, and be the captain of us all:  
We'll do thee homage and be ruled by thee,  
Love thee as our commander and our king.

FIRST OUT. But if thou scorn our courtesy, thou diest.

SEC. OUT. Thou shalt not live to brag what we have  
offer'd.

VAL. I take your offer, and will live with you, 70  
Provided that you do no outrages  
On silly women or poor passengers.

THIRD OUT. No, we detest such vile base practices.  
Come, go with us, we'll bring thee to our crews,  
And show thee all the treasure we have got;  
Which, with ourselves, all rest at thy dispose. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE II—MILAN

#### OUTSIDE THE DUKE'S PALACE, UNDER SILVIA'S CHAMBER

*Enter PROTEUS*

PRO. Already have I been false to Valentine,  
And now I must be as unjust to Thurio.  
Under the colour of commending him,  
I have access my own love to prefer:  
But Silvia is too fair, too true, too holy,

*74 crews*] Collier reads *cave*, and Singer *caves*. But *Delius'* reading,  
*crew*, may well be right.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT IV

---

To be corrupted with my worthless gifts.  
When I protest true loyalty to her,  
She twits me with my falsehood to my friend;  
When to her beauty I commend my vows,  
She bids me think how I have been forsworn 10  
In breaking faith with Julia whom I loved :  
And notwithstanding all her sudden quips,  
The least whereof would quell a lover's hope,  
Yet, spaniel-like, the more she spurns my love,  
The more it grows, and fawneth on her still.  
But here comes Thurio : now must we to her window,  
And give some evening music to her ear.

*Enter THURIO and MUSICIANS*

THU. How now, Sir Proteus, are you crept before us ?

PRO. Ay, gentle Thurio ; for you know that love  
Will creep in service where it cannot go. 20

THU. Ay, but I hope, sir, that you love not here.

PRO. Sir, but I do ; or else I would be hence.

THU. Who ? Silvia ?

PRO. Ay, Silvia ; for your sake.

THU. I thank you for your own. Now, gentlemen,  
Let's tune, and to it lustily awhile.

*Enter, at a distance, Host, and JULIA in boy's clothes*

HOST. Now, my young guest, methinks you're ally-  
cholly : I pray you, why is it ?

JUL. Marry, mine host, because I cannot be merry.

---

20 *creep in service . . . cannot go*] Cf. the Scottish proverb : "Kindness  
will creep where it cannot gang."

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

HOST. Come, we'll have you merry: I'll bring you where you shall hear music, and see the gentleman that so you ask for.

JUL. But shall I hear him speak?

HOST. Ay, that you shall.

JUL. That will be music.

*[Music plays.]*

HOST. Hark, hark!

JUL. Is he among these?

HOST. Ay: but, peace! let's hear 'em.

### SONG.

Who is Silvia? what is she,  
That all our swains commend her?  
Holy, fair, and wise is she;  
The heaven such grace did lend her,  
That she might admired be.

40

Is she kind as she is fair?  
For beauty lives with kindness.  
Love doth to her eyes repair,  
To help him of his blindness,  
And, being help'd, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,  
That Silvia is excelling;  
She excels each mortal thing  
Upon the dull earth dwelling:  
To her let us garlands bring.

50

HOST. How now! are you 'sadder than you were before? How do you, man? the music likes you not.

38-52] No musical setting earlier than that of Richard Leveridge of 1727 is extant. Schubert's setting of 1826 is now the best known. There are at least sixteen other nineteenth-century settings.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT IV

---

JUL. You mistake ; the musician likes me not.

HOST. Why, my pretty youth ?

JUL. He plays false, father.

HOST. How ? out of tune on the strings ?

JUL. Not so ; but yet so false that he grieves my very heart-strings. 60

HOST. You have a quick ear.

JUL. Ay, I would I were deaf ; it makes me have a slow heart.

HOST. I perceive you delight not in music.

JUL. Not a whit, when it jars so.

HOST. Hark, what fine change is in the music !

JUL. Ay, that change is the spite.

HOST. You would have them always play but one thing ?

JUL. I would always have one play but one thing.  
But, host, doth this Sir Proteus that we talk on  
Often resort unto this gentlewoman ? 70

HOST. I tell you what Launce, his man, told me, —  
he loved her out of all nick.

JUL. Where is Launce ?

HOST. Gone to seek his dog ; which to-morrow, by his master's command, he must carry for a present to his lady.

JUL. Peace ! stand aside : the company parts.

PRO. Sir Thurio, fear not you : I will so plead,  
That you shall say my cunning drift excels.

THU. Where meet we ?

PRO. At Saint Gregory's well.

THU. Farewell. 80

*[Exit Thurio and Musicians.]*

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

*Enter SILVIA above*

PRO. Madam, good even to your ladyship.

SIL. I thank you for your music, gentlemen.

Who is that that spake?

PRO. One, lady, if you knew his pure heart's truth,  
You would quickly learn to know him by his voice.

SIL. Sir Proteus, as I take it.

PRO. Sir Proteus, gentle lady, and your servant.

SIL. What's your will?

PRO. That I may compass yours.

SIL. You have your wish; my will is even this:

That presently you hie you home to bed.

Thou subtle, perjured, false, disloyal man!

Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless,

To be seduced by thy flattery,

That hast deceived so many with thy vows?

Return, return, and make thy love amends.

For me, — by this pale queen of night I swear,

I am so far from granting thy request,

That I despise thee for thy wrongful suit;

And by and by intend to chide myself

Even for this time I spend in talking to thee.

PRO. I grant, sweet love, that I did love a lady;  
But she is dead.

JUL. [*Aside*] 'T were false, if I should speak it;  
For I am sure she is not buried.

SIL. Say that she be; yet Valentine thy friend  
Survives; to whom, thyself art witness,

90

100

---

88-89 *will . . . wish*] See note on I, iii, 63, *supra*.



# TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT IV

I am betroth'd : and art thou not ashamed  
To wrong him with thy importunacy ?

PRO. I likewise hear that Valentine is dead.

SIL. And so suppose am I ; for in his grave  
Assure thyself my love is buried. 110

PRO. Sweet lady, let me rake it from the earth.

SIL. Go to thy lady's grave, and call hers thence ;  
Or, at the least, in hers sepulchre thine.

JUL. [*Aside*] He heard not that.

PRO. Madam, if your heart be so obdurate,  
Vouchsafe me yet your picture for my love,  
The picture that is hanging in your chamber ;  
To that I 'll speak, to that I 'll sigh and weep :  
For since the substance of your perfect self  
Is else devoted, I am but a shadow ; 120  
And to your shadow will I make true love.

JUL. [*Aside*] If 't were a substance, you would, sure,  
deceive it,  
And make it but a shadow, as I am.

SIL. I am very loath to be your idol, sir ;  
But since your falsehood shall become you well  
To worship shadows and adore false shapes,  
Send to me in the morning, and I 'll send it :  
And so, good rest.

PRO. As wretches have o'ernight  
That wait for execution in the morn.

[*Exeunt Pro. and Sil. severally.*]

---

111 rake] uncover.

120 else devoted] dedicated elsewhere, to another.

125-126 *Your falsehood . . . shapes*] your deceitful behaviour harmon-

### SCENE III TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

JUL. Host, will you go ?

130

HOST. By my halidom, I was fast asleep.

JUL. Pray you, where lies Sir Proteus ?

HOST. Marry, at my house. Trust me, I think 't is almost day.

JUL. Not so ; but it hath been the longest night That e'er I watch'd, and the most heaviest. [*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III—THE SAME

*Enter EGLAMOUR*

EGL. This is the hour that Madam Silvia Entreated me to call and know her mind : There 's some great matter she 'ld employ me in. Madam, madam !

*Enter SILVIA above*

SIL. Who calls ?

EGL. Your servant and your friend ; One that attends your ladyship's command.

SIL. Sir Eglamour, a thousand times good morrow.

EGL. As many, worthy lady, to yourself : According to your ladyship's impose, I am thus early come to know what service It is your pleasure to command me in.

10

SIL. O Eglamour, thou art a gentleman, — Think not I flatter, for I swear I do not, — Valiant, wise, remorseful, well accomplish'd :

ises well with your worship of shadows and your adoration of unrealities.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT IV

---

Thou art not ignorant what dear good will  
 I bear unto the banish'd Valentine ;  
 Nor how my father would enforce me marry  
 Vain Thurio, whom my very soul abhors.  
 Thyself hast loved ; and I have heard thee say  
 No grief did ever come so near thy heart  
 As when thy lady and thy true love died, 90  
 Upon whose grave thou vow'dst pure chastity.  
 Sir Eglamour, I would to Valentine,  
 To Mantua, where I hear he makes abode ;  
 And, for the ways are dangerous to pass,  
 I do desire thy worthy company,  
 Upon whose faith and honour I repose.  
 Urge not my father's anger, Eglamour,  
 But think upon my grief, a lady's grief,  
 And on the justice of my flying hence,  
 To keep me from a most unholy match, 30  
 Which heaven and fortune still rewards with plagues.  
 I do desire thee, even from a heart  
 As full of sorrows as the sea of sands,  
 To bear me company, and go with me :  
 If not, to hide what I have said to thee,  
 That I may venture to depart alone.

EGL. Madam, I pity much your grievances ;  
 Which since I know they virtuously are placed,  
 I give consent to go along with you ;  
 Recking as little what betideth me 40

37-38 *grievances . . . placed*] Your griefs (in love), which since I know  
 they rest on virtuous foundations, i. e., are virtuous.

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

As much I wish all good befortune you.

When will you go ?

SIL. This evening coming.

EGL. Where shall I meet you ?

SIL. At Friar Patrick's cell,  
Where I intend holy confession.

EGL. I will not fail your ladyship. Good morrow,  
gentle lady.

SIL. Good morrow, kind Sir Eglamour.

*[Exeunt severally.]*

## SCENE IV — THE SAME

*Enter LAUNCE, with his Dog*

LAUNCE. When a man's servant shall play the cur with him, look you, it goes hard : one that I brought up of a puppy ; one that I saved from drowning, when three or four of his blind brothers and sisters went to it ! I have taught him, even as one would say precisely, "thus I would teach a dog." I was sent to deliver him as a present to Mistress Silvia from my master ; and I came no sooner into the dining-chamber, but he steps me to her trencher, and steals her capon's leg : O, 't is a foul thing when a cur cannot keep himself in all companies ! I would have, as one should say, one that takes upon him to be a dog indeed, to be, as it were, a dog at all things. If I had not had more wit than he, to take a fault upon me that he did, I think verily he had been hanged for 't ; sure as I live, he had suffered for 't : you shall judge. He thrusts me himself into the

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT IV

---

company of three or four gentlemanlike dogs, under the duke's table: he had not been there — bless the mark! — a pissing while, but all the chamber smelt him. "Out with the dog!" says one: "What cur is that?" says another: "Whip him out," says the third: "Hang him up," says the duke. I, having been acquainted with the smell before, knew it was Crab, and goes me to the fellow that whips the dogs: "Friend," quoth I, "you mean to whip the dog?" "Ay, marry, do I," quoth he. "You do him the more wrong," quoth I; "'t was I did the thing you wot of." He makes me no more ado, but whips me out of the chamber. How many master's would do this for his servant? Nay, I'll be sworn, I have sat in the stocks for puddings he hath stolen, otherwise he had been executed; I have stood on the pillory for geese he hath killed, otherwise he had suffered for 't. Thou thinkest not of this now. Nay, I remember the trick you served me when I took my leave of Madam Silvia: did not I bid thee still mark me, and do as I do? when didst thou see me heave up my leg, and make water against a gentlewoman's farthingale? didst thou ever see me do such a trick?

*Enter PROTEUS and JULIA*

PRO. Sebastian is thy name?—I like thee well,  
And will employ thee in some service presently.

---

23 *fellow that whips the dogs*]: This was part of the duty of the usher of the table in great households. Cf. *Mucedorus*, 1598 (Dodsley's "Old Plays" Vol. VII, p.240), where the function is fully described.

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

JUL. In what you please : I'll do what I can.

PRO. I hope thou wilt. [*To Launce*] How now, you  
whoreson peasant !

40

Where have you been these two days loitering ?

LAUNCE. Marry, sir, I carried Mistress Silvia the dog  
you bade me.

PRO. And what says she to my little jewel ?

LAUNCE. Marry, she says your dog was a cur, and tells  
you currish thanks is good enough for such a present.

PRO. But she received my dog ?

LAUNCE. No, indeed, did she not : here have I  
brought him back again.

PRO. What, didst thou offer her this from me ?

50

LAUNCE. Ay, sir ; the other squirrel was stolen from  
me by the hangman boys in the market-place : and then  
I offered her mine own, who is a dog as big as ten of  
yours, and therefore the gift the greater.

PRO. Go get thee hence, and find my dog again,  
Or ne'er return again into my sight.

Away, I say ! stay'st thou to vex me here ?

[*Exit Launce.*]

A slave, that still an end turns me to shame !

Sebastian, I have entertained thee,

Partly that I have need of such a youth,

60

That can with some discretion do my business,

For 't is no trusting to yond foolish lout ;

But chiefly for thy face and thy behaviour,

---

52 *the hangman boys*] This is Singer's happy emendation of the Folio  
reading, "the Hangmans boyes." "Hangman" is here used  
adjectively, in the sense of *rascally* or *mischievous*.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT IV

Which, if my augury deceive me not,  
Witness good bringing up, fortune, and truth :  
Therefore know thou, for this I entertain thee.  
Go presently, and take this ring with thee,  
Deliver it to Madam Silvia :  
She loved me well deliver'd it to me.

JUL. It seems you loved not her, to leave her token. 70  
She is dead, belike ?

PRO. Not so ; I think she lives.

JUL. Alas !

PRO. Why dost thou cry, " alas " ?

JUL. I cannot choose  
But pity her.

PRO. Wherefore shouldst thou pity her ?

JUL. Because methinks that she loved you as well  
As you do love your lady Silvia :  
She dreams on him that has forgot her love ;  
You dote on her that cares not for your love.  
'T is pity love should be so contrary ;  
And thinking on it makes me cry, " alas ! " 80

PRO. Well, give her that ring, and therewithal  
This letter. That 's her chamber. Tell my lady  
I claim the promise for her heavenly picture.  
Your message done, hie home unto my chamber,  
Where thou shalt find me, sad and solitary. [*Exit.*]

JUL. How many women would do such a message ?  
Alas, poor Proteus ! thou hast entertain'd  
A fox to be the shepherd of thy lambs.  
Alas, poor fool ! why do I pity him  
That with his very heart despiseth me ? 90

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

Because he loves her, he despiseth me ;  
Because I love him, I must pity him.  
This ring I gave him when he parted from me,  
To bind him to remember my good will ;  
And now am I, unhappy messenger,  
To plead for that which I would not obtain,  
To carry that which I would have refused,  
To praise his faith which I would have dispraised.  
I am my master's true-confirmed love ;  
But cannot be true servant to my master, 100  
Unless I prove false traitor to myself.  
Yet will I woo for him, but yet so coldly,  
As, heaven it knows, I would not have him speed.

*Enter SILVIA, attended*

Gentlewoman, good day ! I pray you, be my mean  
To bring me where to speak with Madam Silvia.

SIL. What would you with her, if that I be she ?

JUL. If you be she, I do entreat your patience  
To hear me speak the message I am sent on.

SIL. From whom ?

JUL. From my master, Sir Proteus, madam. 110

SIL. O, he sends you for a picture.

JUL. Ay, madam.

SIL. Ursula, bring my picture there.

Go give your master this : tell him, from me,  
One Julia, that his changing thoughts forget,  
Would better fit his chamber than this shadow.

JUL. Madam, please you peruse this letter. —  
Pardon me, madam ; I have unadvised



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT IV

---

Deliver'd you a paper that I should not :

This is the letter to your ladyship.

130

SIL. I pray thee, let me look on that again. .

JUL. It may not be ; good madam, pardon me.

SIL. There, hold !

I will not look upon your master's lines :

I know they are stuff'd with protestations,

And full of new-found oaths ; which he will break

As easily as I do tear his paper.

JUL. Madam, he sends your ladyship this ring.

SIL. The more shame for him that he sends it me ;

For I have heard him say a thousand times

130

His Julia gave it him at his departure.

Though his false finger have profaned the ring,

Mine shall not do his Julia so much wrong.

JUL. She thanks you.

SIL. What say'st thou ?

JUL. I thank you, madam, that you tender her.

Poor gentlewoman ! my master wrongs her much.

SIL. Dost thou know her ?

JUL. Almost as well as I do know myself :

To think upon her woes I do protest

140

That I have wept a hundred several times.

SIL. Belike she thinks that Proteus hath forsook her.

JUL. I think she doth ; and that 's her cause of sorrow.

SIL. Is she not passing fair ?

JUL. She hath been fairer, madam, than she is :

When she did think my master loved her well,

She, in my judgement, was as fair as you ;

But since she did neglect her looking-glass,

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

And threw her sun-expelling mask away,  
The air hath starved the roses in her cheeks, 150  
And pinch'd the lily-tincture of her face,  
That now she is become as black as I.

SIL. How tall was she ?

JUL. About my stature : for, at Pentecost,  
When all our pageants of delight were play'd,  
Our youth got me to play the woman's part,  
And I was trimm'd in Madam Julia's gown ;  
Which served me as fit, by all men's judgements,  
As if the garment had been made for me :  
Therefore I know she is about my height. 160  
And at that time I made her weep agood,  
For I did play a lamentable part :  
Madam, 't was Ariadne passioning  
For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight ;  
Which I so lively acted with my tears,  
That my poor mistress, moved therewithal,  
Wept bitterly ; and, would I might be dead,  
If I in thought felt not her very sorrow !

SIL. She is beholding to thee, gentle youth.  
Alas, poor lady, desolate and left ! 170  
I weep myself to think upon thy words.  
Here, youth, there is my purse : I give thee this  
For thy sweet mistress' sake, because thou lovest her.  
Farewell. *[Exit Silvia, with attendants.]*

JUL. And she shall thank you for 't, if e'er you know  
her.

A virtuous gentlewoman, mild and beautiful !  
I hope my master's suit will be but cold,

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT IV

---

Since she respects my mistress' love so much.

Alas, how love can trifle with itself !

Here is her picture : let me see ; I think,

190

If I had such a tire, this face of mine

Were full as lovely as is this of hers :

And yet the painter flatter'd her a little,

Unless I flatter with myself too much.

Her hair is auburn, mine is perfect yellow :

If that be all the difference in his love,

I'll get me such a colour'd periwig.

Her eyes are grey as glass ; and so are mine :

Ay, but her forehead 's low, and mine 's as high.

What should it be that he respects in her,

190

But I can make respective in myself,

If this fond Love were not a blinded god ?

Come, shadow, come, and take this shadow up,

For 't is thy rival. O thou senseless form,

Thou shalt be worshipp'd, kiss'd, loved, and adored !

And, were there sense in his idolatry,

My substance should be statue in thy stead.

I'll use thee kindly for thy mistress' sake,

That used me so ; or else, by Jove I vow,

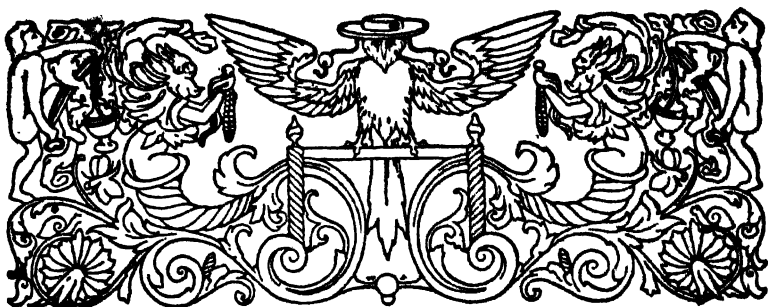
I should have scratch'd out your unseeing eyes,

200

To make my master out of love with thee !

[*Erit.*

200 *unseeing eyes*] Cf. *Macb.*, III, iv, 95 : "Thou hast *no speculation* in those *eyes*."

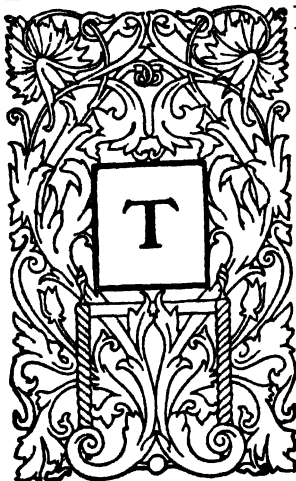


## ACT FIFTH—SCENE I—MILAN

### AN ABBEY

*Enter EGLAMOUR*

EGLAMOUR



THE SUN BEGINS TO GILD  
the western sky ;  
And now it is about the very  
hour  
That Silvia, at Friar Patrick's  
cell, should meet me.  
She will not fail, for lovers break  
not hours,  
Unless it be to come before their  
time ;  
So much they spur their expedi-  
tion.  
See where she comes.

*Enter SILVIA*

Lady, a happy evening !

SIL. Amen, amen ! Go on, good Eglamour,  
Out at the postern by the abbey-wall :  
I fear I am attended by some spies.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT V

EGL. Fear not: the forest is not three leagues off;  
If we recover that, we are sure enough. [Exeunt.]

### SCENE II — THE SAME

#### THE DUKE'S PALACE

*Enter THURIO, PROTEUS, and JULIA*

THU. Sir Proteus, what says Silvia to my suit?

PRO. O, sir, I find her milder than she was;  
And yet she takes exceptions at your person.

THU. What, that my leg is too long?

PRO. No; that it is too little.

THU. I'll wear a boot, to make it somewhat rounder.

JUL. [*Aside*] But love will not be spurr'd to what it  
loathes.

THU. What says she to my face?

PRO. She says it is a fair one.

THU. Nay then, the wanton lies; my face is black. 10

PRO. But pearls are fair; and the old saying is,  
Black men are pearls in beauteous ladies' eyes.

JUL. [*Aside*] 'Tis true, such pearls as put out ladies  
eyes;

For I had rather wink than look on them.

THU. How likes she my discourse?

PRO. Ill, when you talk of war.

12 *Black men . . . eyes*] A proverbial phrase. Cf. *A black man is a jewel in a fair woman's eye* (Ray's Proverbs).

13 *pearls*] A quibble on the word "pearl" in the sense of cataract.

## SCENE II TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

THU. But well, when I discourse of love and peace ?

JUL. [*Aside*] But better, indeed, when you hold your  
• peace.

THU. What says she to my valour ?

PRO. O, sir, she makes no doubt of that. 90

JUL. [*Aside*] She needs not, when she knows it  
cowardice.

THU. What says she to my birth ?

PRO. That you are well derived.

JUL. [*Aside*] True ; from a gentleman to a fool.

THU. Considers she my possessions ?

PRO. O, ay ; and pities them.

THU. Wherefore ?

JUL. [*Aside*] That such an ass should owe them.

PRO. That they are out by lease.

JUL. Here comes the duke. 90

*Enter DUKE*

DUKE. How now, Sir Proteus ! how now, Thurio !  
Which of you saw Sir Eglamour of late ?

THU. Not I.

PRO. Nor I.

DUKE. Saw you my daughter ?

PRO. Neither.

DUKE. Why then,  
She's fled unto that peasant Valentine :

20 *doubt*] A quibble on the word in the sense of "fear."

29 *out by lease*] Not enjoyed by the owner, but leased out to be enjoyed by another. The insinuation is that the wise man keeps his possessions for his own enjoyment.

**TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT V**

**And Eglamour is in her company.**

'T is true ; for Friar Laurencè met them both,  
As he in penance wander'd through the forest ;  
Him he knew well, and guess'd that it was she,  
But, being mask'd, he was not sure of it ;  
Besides, she did intend confession

**At Patrick's cell this even ; and there she was not ;  
These likelihoods confirm her flight from hence.**

Therefore, I pray you, stand not to discourse,  
But mount you presently, and meet with me  
Upon the rising of the mountain-foot  
That leads toward Mantua, whither they are fled :  
Dispatch, sweet gentlemen, and follow me.

THU. Why, this it is to be a peevish girl,  
That flies her fortune when it follows her. 50  
I'll after, more to be revenged on Eglamour  
Than for the love of reckless Silvia. [*Exit.*]

PRO. And I will follow, more for Silvia's love  
Than hate of Eglamour, that goes with her. [*Erit.*]

**JUL.** And I will follow, more to cross that love  
Than hate for Silvia, that is gone for love. [*Erit.*]

**SCENE III — THE FRONTIERS OF MANTUA**

## THE FOREST

*Enter OUTLAWS with SILVIA*

**FIRST OUT.** Come, come,  
Be patient ; we must bring you to our captain.

SIL. A thousand more mischances than this one  
Have learn'd me how to brook this patiently.

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

SEC. OUT. Come, bring her away.

FIRST OUT. Where is the gentleman that was with  
• her?

THIRD OUT. Being nimble-footed, he hath outrun us,  
But Moses and Valerius follow him.

Go thou with her to the west end of the wood ;  
There is our captain : we 'll follow him that 's fled ; 10  
The thicket is beset ; he cannot 'scape.

FIRST OUT. Come, I must bring you to our captain's  
cave :

Fear not ; he bears an honourable mind,  
And will not use a woman lawlessly.

SIL. O Valentine, this I endure for thee ! [Exeunt.

### SCENE IV

#### *ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST*

*Enter VALENTINE*

VAL. How use doth breed a habit in a man !  
This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,  
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns :  
Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,  
And to the nightingale's complaining notes  
Tune my distresses and record my woes.  
O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,  
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless,  
Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall,  
And leave no memory of what it was !  
Repair me with thy presence, Silvia ;

10



## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT V

---

Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn swain !  
What halloing and what stir is this to-day ?  
These are my mates, that make their wills their law,\*  
Have some unhappy passenger in chase.  
They love me well ; yet I have much to do  
To keep them from uncivil outrages.  
Withdraw thee, Valentine : who's this comes here ?

*Enter PROTEUS, SILVIA, and JULIA*

PRO. Madam, this service I have done for you,  
Though you respect not aught your servant doth, 30  
To hazard life, and rescue you from him  
That would have forced your honour and your love :  
Vouchsafe me, for my meed, but one fair look ;  
A smaller boon than this I cannot beg,  
And less than this, I am sure, you cannot give.

VAL. [*Aside*] How like a dream is this I see and hear !  
Love, lend me patience to forbear awhile.

SIL. O miserable, unhappy that I am !

PRO. Unhappy were you, madam, ere I came ;  
But by my coming I have made you happy. 30

SIL. By thy approach thou makest me most unhappy.

JUL. [*Aside*] And me, when he approacheth to your  
presence.

SIL. Had I been seized by a hungry lion,  
I would have been a breakfast to the beast,  
Rather than have false Proteus rescue me.  
O, Heaven be judge how I love Valentine,  
Whose life's as tender to me as my soul !  
And full as much, for more there cannot be,

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

---

I do detest false perjured Proteus.

Therefore be gone ; solicit me no more.

40

PRO. What dangerous action, stood it next to death,  
Would I not undergo for one calm look !

O, 't is the curse in love, and still approved,  
When women cannot love where they're beloved !

SIL. When Proteus cannot love where he's beloved.

Read over Julia's heart, thy first, best love,  
For whose dear sake thou didst then rend thy faith  
Into a thousand oaths ; and all those oaths  
Descended into perjury, to love me.

Thou hast no faith left now, unless thou 'dst two,  
And that's far worse than none ; better have none  
Than plural faith which is too much by one :  
Thou counterfeit to thy true friend !

50

PRO. In love

Who respects friend ?

SIL. All men but Proteus.

PRO. Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words  
Can no way change you to a milder form,  
I'll woo you like a soldier, at arms' end,  
And love you 'gainst the nature of love, — force ye.

SIL. O heaven !

PRO. I'll force thee yield to my desire.

VAL. Ruffian, let go that rude uncivil touch,  
Thou friend of an ill fashion !

60

PRO. Valentine !

VAL. Thou common friend, that's without faith or love,

**TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA    ACT V**

For such is a friend now ; treacherous man !  
Thou hast beguiled my hopes ; nought but mine eye  
Could have persuaded me : now I dare not say  
I have one friend alive ; thou wouldst disprove me.  
Who should be trusted now, when one's right hand  
Is perjured to the bosom ? Proteus,  
I am sorry I must never trust thee more,  
But count the world a stranger for thy sake.  
The private wound is deepest : O time most accurst,  
'Mongst all foes that a friend should be the worst !

PRO. My shame and guilt confounds me.  
 Forgive me, Valentine: if hearty sorrow  
 Be a sufficient ransom for offence,  
 I tender 't here; I do as truly suffer  
 As e'er I did commit.

VAL.                                    Then I am paid ;  
And once again I do receive thee honest.  
Who by repentance is not satisfied  
Is nor of heaven nor earth, for these are pleased. 80  
By penitence the Eternal's wrath 's appeased :  
And, that my love may appear plain and free,  
All that was mine in Silvia I give thee.

**JUL.** O me unhappy ! [Swoons.]

PRO. Look to the boy.

67 The reading of the Second, Third, and Fourth Folios. The First Folio omits *now*.

71 A twelve-syllabled line, a rare irregularity in Shakespeare's early plays.

82-83 Critics are unanimous in condemning as the fruit of hasty composition Valentine's unhesitating surrender of Silvia to Proteus.

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

VAL. Why, boy! why, wag! how now! what's the matter? Look up; speak.

JUL. O good sir, my master charged me to deliver a ring to Madam Silvia, which, out of my neglect, was never done. 90

PRO. Where is that ring, boy?

JUL. Here 't is; this is it.

PRO. How! let me see:

Why, this is the ring I gave to Julia.

JUL. O, cry you mercy, sir, I have mistook:  
This is the ring you sent to Silvia.

PRO. But how camest thou by this ring? At my depart

I gave this unto Julia.

JUL. And Julia herself did give it me;  
And Julia herself hath brought it hither.

PRO. How! Julia!

100

JUL. Behold her that gave aim to all thy oaths,  
And entertain'd 'em deeply in her heart.  
How oft hast thou with perjury cleft the root!  
O Proteus, let this habit make thee blush!  
Be thou ashamed that I have took upon me  
Such an immodest raiment, if shame live  
In a disguise of love:  
It is the lesser blot, modesty finds,  
Women to change their shapes, than men their minds.

101 *that gave aim . . . oaths*] the object at which all your oaths were aimed.

103 *cleft the root*] hit the root (of her heart), the centre of the target;  
an allusion to cleaving the pin in archery.

**TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT V**

PRO. Than men their minds! 't is true. O heaven,  
were man

But constant, he were perfect ! That one error  
Fills him with faults ; makes him run through all the  
sins :

**Inconstancy falls off ere it begins.**

**What is in Silvia's face, but I may spy  
More fresh in Julia's with a constant eye?**

VAL. Come, come, a hand from either :  
Let me be blest to make this happy close ;  
'T were pity two such friends should be long foes.

**PRO.** Bear witness, Heaven, I have my wish for ever.

JUL. And I mine. 120

*Enter OUTLAWS, with DUKE and THURIO*

**OUTLAWS.** A prize, a prize, a prize!

VAL. Forbear, forbear, I say ! it is my lord the duke.  
Your Grace is welcome to a man disgraced,  
Banished Valentine.

**DUKE.** Sir Valentine !

**THU.** Yonder is Silvia ; and Silvia's mine.

VAL. *Thurio, give back, or else embrace thy death ;  
Come not within the measure of my wrath ;  
Do not name Silvia thine ; if once again,  
Verona shall not hold thee. Here she stands :  
Take but possession of her with a touch :  
I dare thee but to breathe upon my love.*

129 *Verona*] This is the reading of the old editions. The sense demands a change to *Milan* or *Milano*. Cf. III, i, 81, *supra*. The error is probably due to the author's hasty composition.

## SCENE IV TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

THU. Sir Valentine, I care not for her, I :  
 I hold him but a fool that will endanger  
 His body for a girl that loves him not :  
 I claim her not, and therefore she is thine.

DUKE. The more degenerate and base art thou,  
 To make such means for her as thou hast done,  
 And leave her on such slight conditions.

Now, by the honour of my ancestry,  
 I do applaud thy spirit, Valentine,  
 And think thee worthy of an empress' love :

140

Know, then, I here forget all former griefs,  
 Cancel all grudge, repeal thee home again,  
 Plead a new state in thy unrival'd merit,  
 To which I thus subscribe : Sir Valentine,  
 Thou art a gentleman, and well derived ;  
 Take thou thy Silvia, for thou hast deserved her.

VAL. I thank your grace, the gift hath made me  
 happy.

I now beseech you, for your daughter's sake,  
 To grant one boon that I shall ask of you.

150

DUKE. I grant it, for thine own, whate'er it be.

VAL. These banish'd men that I have kept withal  
 Are men endued with worthy qualities :  
 Forgive them what they have committed here,  
 And let them be recall'd from their exile :

137 *To make such means for her*] To adopt such unworthy measures to  
 secure her. "One that *made means* to come by what he had."  
 Cf. *Rich. III*, V, iii, 248.

144 *Plead . . . merit*] Declare or decree a new estate or rank for you  
 in view of your unrivalled merit.

## TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA ACT V

---

They are reformed, civil, full of good,  
And fit for great employment, worthy lord.

DUKE. Thou hast prevail'd ; I pardon them and thee ;  
Dispose of them as thou know'st their deserts.

Come, let us go : we will include all jars 160  
With triumphs, mirth, and rare solemnity.

VAL. And, as we walk along, I dare be bold  
With our discourse to make your Grace to smile.  
What think you of this page, my lord ?

DUKE. I think the boy hath grace in him ; he blushes.

VAL. I warrant you, my lord, more grace than boy.

DUKE. What mean you by that saying ?

VAL. Please you, I'll tell you as we pass along,  
That you will wonder what hath fortun'd.  
Come, Proteus ; 't is your penance but to hear 170  
The story of your loves discovered :  
That done, our day of marriage shall be yours ;  
One feast, one house, one mutual happiness. [*Exeunt.*]















